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THE LIFE OF OUR LIFE

PART THE FIFTH

PASSIONTIDE

FIRST PART

Tediously and
unnecessarily dry.

Could have been made so
much more interesting. But
then H Colridge was an
ex-lawyer

QUARTERLY SERIES VOLUME SIXTY-EIGHT

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PASSIONTIDE

CONTINUATION OF THE PUBLIC LIFE OF OUR LORD

BY

HENRY JAMES COLERIDGE

OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

PART THE FIRST



LONDON

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ET STATIM VENIET AD TEMPLUM SUUM
DOMINATOR QUEM VOS QUÆRITIS
ET ANGELUS TESTAMENTI QUEM VOS VULTIS
ECCE VENIT DICIT DOMINUS EXERCITUUM
ET QUIS POTERIT COGITARE DIEM ADVENTUS EJUS
ET QUIS STABIT AD VIDENDUM EUM
IPSE ENIM QUASI IGNIS CONFLANS
ET QUASI HERBA FULLONUM
ET SEDEBIT CONFLANS ET EMUNDANS ARGENTUM
ET PURGABIT FILIOS LEVI
ET COLABIT EOS
QUASI AURUM ET QUASI ARGENTUM
ET ERUNT DOMINO OFFERENTES
SACRIFICIA IN JUSTITIA

(Ex Propheta Malachæ)

PREFACE.

No one will question the paramount importance, even among the doings and sayings of our Lord's earthly Life, of the latter portion of that Life as it is related to us by the Sacred Historians. They pass, as is their wont, quietly on from the former portions of their narratives to this, without any special introduction or anything that warns their readers that they are entering on a new and more important subject than any of which they have before treated. They wrote for those to whom the whole Life of Jesus Christ was of the most engrossing interest, and who also fully understood that if some few weeks of the former history had been passed over in silence, as so many years of our Lord's Life had been left in obscurity, it would make a difference comparatively small, but that the last few days during which the great Sacrifice of Redemption was prepared and consummated were the time into which the great acts were crowded to which the whole of the world's history before had looked forward, and which the whole future of the human race in this world and in the next are but the issues and consequences. It was then that the

*

relations between God and man were fundamentally changed, that sin and death were done away, and the usurped empire of Satan destroyed by the Atonement through the Precious Blood, that Heaven was thrown open and the captivity of Limbus and Purgatory set free. The New Law took the place of the Old, the New Covenant succeeded to the Old, the shadow was supplanted by the substance, the new Sacrifice and the new Priesthood took the place of what had preceded them. All was done quietly and swiftly, notwithstanding that the howls of human passion and the fury of Satan and his evil angels had never risen higher or raged more frantically. The external facts of this history of the acts of God, which were more magnificent and far-reaching in their effects than the words of Creation itself, and the records which preserve them to us, must be of unequalled importance.

The narratives of the Evangelists, as might well be expected, become more copious and minute in the details of what they now record than has been the case with them before. 'And yet even thus they but seldom go much below the surface, as if reverence held them back more than ever before in this Divine story. It may also be remarked that in this part of the history in particular we especially notice a growth in the revelation which the Church has received from their pens. It is not only that St. Luke, and far more than he, St. John, has added a number of incidents which, most

precious in themselves, must have been present to the memories of the earlier Evangelists or, at least, of those who informed them. It is also and far more to be noticed that the later additions to the story are more valuable, as we say, on account of the intimate knowledge they reveal of our Blessed Lord and His Sacred Heart. No one will question this who considers the character which belongs to such incidents as the Washing of the Feet, the Dismissal of Judas, the Discourse after the Last Supper, the Divine Prayer of our Lord for the Church, the Ecce Homo, the Words to the Daughters of Jerusalem, the Good Thief, and to our Blessed Lady, and the piercing of our Lord's side by the spear. These things, it must be certain, were known to the earlier Evangelists, and it must be attributed to a special counsel on the part of the Divine Author of Scripture that they were withheld, as far as written records go, from the readers of the earlier Evangelists and set before the Church by their later successors.

The volume which is now set before the public does not reach the point in the narrative to which most of these mysteries belong. But the history of the Passion as a whole is written by the same Spirit throughout, and it is well to enter even on its earlier chapters with the reverent thoughts which belong to it as the greatest of all the acts of the Life of our Lord, without which the Incarnation itself and His Teaching and Miracles would not have availed

for the accomplishment of His work of Redemption. The incidents which are here commented on, and which belong to the days from the Procession of Palms up to Holy Thursday, are naturally distinct in character from those with which we are familiar, the Public Life of our Lord. For in the Sacred Heart, we may certainly say, the Passion had already begun on the Day of Palms. Our Lord's demeanour to the world at large, and especially to those who possessed the miserable distinction of being His enemies, was notably altered from the beginning of His last visit to Jerusalem. Their malice and hatred became more and more intense, and their devices against Him more and more unscrupulous, while at the same time He treated them with more freedom and fearlessness and more calm majesty, mingled with severity, than ever before. The present volume brings us down to the evening of Holy Thursday, and, as the readers of the Gospels know, a large portion of the Sacred History remains as yet to be considered, a portion which embraces more than a third of the whole Gospel of St. John. The sayings and doings of the night of the Last Supper form the subject of the next volume, which is already partly finished. But I hope that no one will blame me for lingering carefully over subjects of so much importance and words of so much sweetness and depth of meaning.

H. J. C.

London, 31, Farm Street, W.

Feast of St. Francis of Sales, 1889.

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CHAPTER I.

Our Lord entering on the Passion.

At the beginning of the history of the Sacred Passion it is natural for us to pause awhile, and recall to our thoughts the relation which that history bears to the remainder of the acts and words of our Blessed Lord, as they are preserved to us in the records of the Evangelists. It is not only that these blessed chroniclers of our Lord have been guided to give a special prominence and extent of space to this part of their history, although it contains the account of what the world naturally thought was the defeat of their Master and the destruction of the Kingdom to found which He claimed to have been sent. It is not only that loving friends like to dwell most fondly on the last moments of their greatest benefactors, and that disciples love to gather up every particle of the memories which are connected with such last moments and leavetakings. It is not only that our Lord then showed His love in a more tender manner, which gave an impressiveness and power to His own precepts, examples, and exhortations, which surpassed even what they had possessed before. It is not only that the events of the week of the Passion were in themselves such as to make a far greater sensation on the mind, even of the public, than anything that had hitherto passed in Galilee or Judæa. All these things are true, but not the whole truth.

2 *Our Lord entering on the Passion.*

In every one of the detailed narratives of the four Evangelists there is now evident a change of tone and of feeling, which can be accounted for by nothing else than their sense of the paramount importance of the great acts of God which they have now to relate,—paramount, even in comparison with other deeds and words of our Divine Lord. This pre-eminence of importance can be founded on nothing else than the truth that the Passion of our Lord was, more than the most complete summary of His teaching, or the most magnificent display of His love, or the most glorious instance of virtue in the whole of His Life. Beyond all this it was the one central act for which He came into the world, the work without which the victory would not have been gained, the Sacrifice not offered, the redemption of the world left unaccomplished, and the enemies of the human race left in possession of the conquest which they had achieved in the Fall of man. Every action or suffering of our Blessed Lord was indeed of infinite value in the sight of His Father, by reason of the union of the Divine and Human Natures in His Person. But the work for which He came was the redemption of the world by the Blood shed on the Cross. That was the one Sacrifice that was appointed for the reconciliation between God and man. It is easy, therefore, to understand how this thought must have been prominent in our Blessed Lord's mind at the time. We know that He had seldom spoken of it distinctly, on account of the imperfect conceptions, even of those who had been long His companions. But we can see that the Evangelists have been guided to give to the sayings and doings of the last week of His human life this altogether unique importance of which we speak.

The Catholic Church, in her sacred functions at this time of the year, reflects the thoughts of our Blessed Lord Himself. She begins her celebration of the Passion on the Sunday before Palm Sunday, and, while she veils her pictures and statues, to express the deep grief which falls on her as the year brings round the celebrations of these last days, she seems all through to keep in mind that it is the triumph of a Conqueror that she is celebrating, as well as the death of her beloved Master and Lord. Her first notes announce the display of 'the Standards of the King.' Thus to her, Palm Sunday with its triumph, the people and the children crying hosannas in the Temple, the subsequent cleansing of the Temple, and our Lord's dealings with the priests and people during the days of teaching there, up to the time of His betrayal, as well as the solemn celebrations of Holy Thursday, and all that passed in the Cenacle—all belong to the Passion, as well as the Agony in the Garden, and what passed on Calvary itself. We have not here the history of a week, beginning by a glorious triumph, to be speedily succeeded by a complete and humiliating reverse, which quenched at once the movement that had seemed to promise so bravely, by the death of the chief agent, the scattering of His followers, and the complete victory of His enemies, who had seemed at the outset to be cowed and to quail before Him. So it was to the eye of man, but it was quite the reverse in the eye of God. The triumph of Palm Sunday was nothing in comparison to the victory of Good Friday, and the Conqueror marches on from step to step over His prostrate foes.

Our Lord, with all His ineffable meekness, seems Himself to have taught the Church, by His own

4 *Our Lord entering on the Passion.*

demeanour and conduct during this time, the true aspect of the events which she then commemorates. For His words and actions are clothed with an air of unusual majesty and of peremptoriness in the face of His enemies, of which we shall have to trace the manifestations more than once. These are terrible days of confusion, as they appear to us. Hell seems to be let loose in all the madness of its fury, and the miserable instruments of Hell are led on and on from one wickedness to another, which they had intended to perpetrate in a different manner and at another time. They contradict themselves and bear witness to our Lord against their will, at the very time that they are so full of malice against Him. All this was arranged according to the eternal plans of God and the designs of His mercy for mankind. On each occasion during the ensuing days on which they had to use the free will with which God had endowed them, and the great power for good or for evil which belonged to their position and office, our Lord dealt with them calmly, even tenderly, and at the same time, severely. They were treated by Providence with strict solemn justice. The grace was offered them, by means of which they might, even then, have been converted. But they were not hindered from rejecting it, and thus their actions became so many steps onward in the accomplishment of the great designs of God for the salvation of the world through their wickedness.

It is well to observe how, at each step, in the work they had in hand, they were allowed to go just as far, and no farther, than it suited the plan of Redemption at that stage. Magdalene's act of devotion was not hindered in order that Judas might be preserved from the danger of yielding to

the final temptation which carried him away. The Procession of Palms was not omitted, although it might provoke the Chief Priests to madness. Our Lord taught in the Temple with authority, having driven out from it the buyers and sellers, and He refused to give the explanations which the priests demanded of Him, although both His teaching and His refusal added fuel to the flame of enmity in their hearts. He denounced the Scribes and Pharisees to the people, at the very time that He taught that they were to be obeyed as sitting in the seat of Moses. It was the same all through. If Judas had known the place where the Paschal Supper was to be eaten by our Lord, he might have secured His arrest without tumult, as the Chief Priests wished. But this was not allowed him. Yet our Lord, for a purpose dear to His own Sacred Heart, arranged that Judas should leave the Cenacle before the others, and unsuspected by them. It was the plan of Providence that the arrest should take place at Gethsemani. When the armed band fell to the ground before Him, on His announcing 'I am He,' the same power which laid them prostrate could have blinded their eyes at once, or made them turn their weapons against themselves. But that 'was their hour and the power of darkness.' Everything was to proceed according to the order predetermined in the Divine Counsels, as Daniel said so many years before, speaking of the fixed time in the course of ages 'that transgression may be finished, and sin may have an end, and iniquity may be abolished, and everlasting justice may be brought, and vision and prophecy may be fulfilled, and the Saint of saints may be anointed.'¹

¹ Daniel ix. 24.

6 *Our Lord entering on the Passion.*

In this solemn act His enemies are all the servants of our Lord in bringing about His Sacrifice. And yet they are all free agents, who have opportunity after opportunity given them of drawing back from their sin. They all fall into their place in the great sacrificial procession. Most truly, in that sense, they did not know what they did. All the types of the Law, all the rites of sacrifice, all the prophecies were fulfilled. The Eternal Son of God in His Human Nature was to offer Himself on the altar for the redemption of the world, and all things served and obeyed Him as ministers in their measure in the sacred rite. The priests and the people—though the latter, at least, were His friends; and the representative of the empire of the world—though he wished to hinder the crime, and wrote up officially over His head that He was the King of the Jews; the apostate Apostle—though our Lord knelt at his feet to win his repentance; the very devils themselves—although, as is thought by some, they endeavoured at the last to prevent the consummation of their own triumph, lest it should lead to their destruction—all and each bore his or their part in this the most solemn act of worship and expiation that the universe ever saw. It was an occasion immeasurably greater than the creation of angels and men, and the whole physical world, out of nothing.

It is impossible to suppose that the infinite greatness of the act which He was performing, or any of the great results which were to follow in Heaven and on earth from the Passion of our Lord were hidden from His own mind, and were not lovingly counted up in His Sacred Heart. On the contrary, if it were possible to suppose Him to have been ignorant of what He was doing, we should know from His own

language that He was dwelling upon all these things with an intensity of desire of which no heart but His own was capable. The measure of His desire, and of the love with which He contemplated them, was the measure of His love for God and for man, of His intelligence concerning the greatness of the fruits of which the Passion was to be the cause. He alone knew what it was to be a Redeemer. Now the Gospels only give the theology of the Passion by relating its historical course. They do not draw out the doctrine in any fulness at all. It is left for the Epistles of the Apostles to set all this forth, and they have instructed the Church for ever by what they have left behind them in this way. Her theologians are for ever poring over the words of St. Peter and St. Paul and St. John, and pondering what was that great counsel of mercy which was brought to its consummation on Mount Calvary. But all that St. Peter and St. Paul and St. John have left behind them, in passages scattered over a few letters written to meet the incidental needs of the Churches which they governed, can be little indeed in bulk and depth, if it be placed by the side of our Lord's own thoughts concerning the work which He was then accomplishing.

It is impossible, indeed, to value too highly the Gospel records of the Passion, on which devout souls have fed and will for ever feed while the world lasts. But the Epistles dwell comparatively little on the outward facts of the Passion, though we see how these facts were treasured in the hearts of their writers. There are words here and there about the particulars, as when St. Peter says of our Lord that 'when He was reviled, He did not revile, when He suffered, He threatened not, but delivered Himself to him that

8 *Our Lord entering on the Passion.*

judged Him unjustly, Who His own self bore our sins in His Body on the tree, that we being dead to sin might live to justice, by Whose stripes ye are healed.'² But what the Epistles dwell on is the fruit, and not the details, of the Crucifixion. 'For you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as of gold or silver, from your vain conversation of the tradition of your fathers, but with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb unspotted and undefiled, foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but manifested in the last times for you, who through Him are faithful in God, Who raised Him from the dead and hath given Him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God.'³ They delight in passages in which the Atonement is openly spoken of, and the consequences of the Passion drawn out as 'the oblation whereby He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified,'⁴ 'being delivered up for our sins, and risen again for our justification,'⁵ so that as by the disobedience of one many were made sinners, so also by the obedience of one many shall be made just,'⁶ and others of the same class. It is in these that we may trace the fulfilment of that promise of our Lord to His Apostles at the Last Supper, that the Holy Ghost should teach them all things, and bring all things to their minds, whatsoever He shall have said to them. 'I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now. But when the Spirit of Truth is come, He will teach you all truth, for He shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever things He shall hear He shall speak, and the things to come He shall show you. He shall glorify Me, because He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it to you. All

² 1 St. Peter ii. 23, 24.

³ 1 St. Peter i. 18—21.

⁴ Heb. x. 14.

⁵ Rom. iv. 25.

⁶ Rom. v. 19.

things whatsoever the Father hath are Mine, therefore I said that He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it to you.' These words of course refer to many other things beside the effects of the Passion. But when we take in our hands the Epistles as reflecting the minds of the Apostles under the illumination of the Holy Ghost, we can hardly think, either that any doctrines can have been more important for the Church to have received under His guidance than these, or that any teaching short of that of the Holy Ghost can have produced these wonderful contemplations in the minds of her children.⁷

These considerations may help us in some measure to understand what it was to our Lord to enter on His Passion. The triumph of the Day of Palms, the cavils of His enemies, the disputes in the Temple, in which one after another of the various classes of His enemies were reduced to silence, the denunciation of the Scribes and Pharisees to the people, the prophecies of the destruction of Jerusalem and of the end of the world, the last parables and warnings,

⁷ 'Beside the narrative of the Sacred Passion, we find in the New Testament, especially in the Epistles of St. Paul, a number of contemplations and considerations on the Sacred Passion, which have become the foundation of much of the theology of the Church, as well as the source of continual meditation to her devout children. It seems to be a part of the office of St. Paul, to present to the Church the causes, the significance, the effects, the Divine reasons of the great sacrifice of the Cross, its results in Heaven and on earth and below the earth, in time and in eternity, the place which it occupies in the counsels of God, rather than the details of the history, which, however, were clearly the daily occupation of his mind. In this he is not singular among the Apostles, for we find the same line of thought in St. Peter and St. John. But their Epistles are comparatively of small bulk, and the great development of the subject of which we speak was left for the Apostle of the Gentiles, the disciple of Gamaliel, whose mind was stored with all the traditional learning of the Jewish schools, while he was at the same time familiar with the philosophy of the ancient world outside the chosen people' (*The Baptism of the King*, Preface, pp. vi. vii.).

10 *Our Lord entering on the Passion.*

and then the short retirement till Thursday evening, the Cenacle and all its half revealed mysteries, followed by the last exit to Gethsemani and the whole day of the Passion—all were counted up in the Sacred Heart beforehand, and all had interests and pains or consolations of their own. But to Him they were all but the external accomplishment of the great mystery of Eternity, for which the Incarnate Son of God became Man, and in which the Power and Wisdom and Love of God put themselves with a splendour and might to the imagination of which the highest Seraphim never soared. May He grant us, through His Holy Spirit, 'to handle this so great mystery with all the reverence, all the honour, all the devotion, and awe, which are needful and becoming in those who have to deal with it!—ever to believe, and to understand, and to feel, and to hold, and to speak, and to think, concerning It, as is pleasing to Him and expedient for our own souls!'⁸

⁸ *In oratione Ecclesiæ ante Missam.*

CHAPTER II.

The Procession of Palms.

St. Matt. xxi. 14—17 ; St. Mark xi. 1—11 ; St. Luke xix. 29—44 ;
St. John xii. 12—18 ; *Story of the Gospels*, § 132.

IT was in the Providence of God that the great week in which the redemption of the world was to be worked out should be marked, at its very outset, with circumstances of unusual splendour, and in a manner altogether unprecedented in the course of our Lord's Public Life. Hitherto, though there had not been wanting signs of His great power, and acts of the highest authority, they had not been accompanied by any outward display of pomp and royal state. Yet, humanly speaking, He had now more than ever need of avoiding whatever might give a handle to His enemies for charging Him with ambition, assumption of authority, or an appeal to popular passion and enthusiasm in His favour. After the great miracle of the feeding of the five thousand the people had been inclined to take Him by force and make Him a King. Then He had fled from the occasion of danger, which would have involved Him and His followers if any such attempt had been made. Now He was not in the distant and comparatively safe region of Galilee, where His adherents would have had only the power of the tetrarch Herod to cope with immediately. He was in the capital itself, and on the occasion of a feast which brought the

Jews to Jerusalem in hundreds of thousands, and when the always jealous power of Rome was more than ever on the watch, ready to drown in blood the slightest movement of the national spirit which was the chief source of fear to the rulers of the world.

And, apart from the danger from the Roman power, our Lord was well aware that He had never approached the Holy City with more to fear from the malice and perfectly unscrupulous hostility of His enemies, who held the reins of government and who would not fear to wield all the power which they possessed for His destruction, the moment that an opportunity was given them, of compassing His death. We need not repeat what has already been said on this subject. The circumstances of the present time were in many respects altered for the worse, as far as the danger to our Lord was concerned. The impossibility of meeting His claims and influence in any way short of His death, had become more evident since the great miracle of Lazarus. His teaching had become more pronounced than ever with regard to His own Divine Person. The people were more than ever enthusiastic in His favour. During the last year He had brought the sphere of His more ordinary preaching far closer than before to the seat of authority and government. At the same time they were aware that He was more uncompromising than ever in His denunciations of themselves, and that it became more clear every day that He must either conquer them or that they must conquer Him. They had already determined His death, and they had also decreed that the innocent Lazarus, whose only crime could be that our Lord had raised him to life,

must be removed as well as His Master. It was not enough to excommunicate all who believed in Him. And just at this moment, as our Lord knew, the means which they had so long been seeking were ready to their hand. The Supper at Bethany had not passed without the incident which broke down the last lingering scruples of the false Apostle, and determined him to put into the hands of the enemies of our Lord the opportunity of possessing themselves of His Sacred Person, without tumult or publicity, whenever it might be most convenient.

Thus, if our Lord had been guided by motives of human policy and prudence, He might on this occasion have abstained from any display of His power with the people, such as might have implied the loftiness of His claims on their allegiance. We may say more. For on former occasions He had acted with the greatest consideration towards His enemies. He had shown this, twice and thrice over, by retiring from the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, or from Jerusalem itself, from fear of making their hostility to Him more pronounced and desperate. St. Matthew notices this among the fulfilments of the prophecies in our Lord's Life—'that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaias the prophet saying, Behold My Servant Whom I have chosen, My Beloved in Whom My Soul has been well pleased. I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He shall show judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not contend nor cry out, neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets. The bruised reed He shall not break, and smoking flax He shall not extinguish, till He send forth judgment unto victory. And in His name the Gentiles shall hope.'⁸ St. Matthew quotes these

⁸ St. Matt. xii. 17 ; Isaias xlii. 1.

words early in his narrative. But now the time spoken of by the prophet as the 'sending forth judgment unto victory,' was come, though it was not to be a victory after the manner of the world.

Notwithstanding all human reasons against publicity and display on this great occasion, it was a part of the Providence of God that the first steps in the great act of the Passion should be taken with a certain amount of striking magnificence and solemnity. Even in the eyes of man what was to be accomplished in the course of the few days, which were now beginning, was too great and too new and too far reaching in consequence and issues, to be passed over in silence. The great work of the ransoming of the world, the beginning of the new creation, the foundation of the eternal Kingdom of God, the reconciliation between Heaven and earth, the destruction of the works of the evil one, the victory over sin and Hell and death, the glorification of the Father by the Son in His Human Nature, and the exaltation of the Son of Man, was to be proclaimed to the whole universe, and celebrated by the highest praises that the creatures for whose behoof it was wrought could render to the Merciful Redeemer. And so God had determined that it should be foretold that the Incarnate King was to come, in meek pomp and humble power, to the city which was to be the scene of so great a victory. What had thus been foretold by the prophets was now to be fulfilled. It was not to be done in a corner, though its circumstances of attendant pomp might perhaps move the enemies of our Lord to greater malice, and even seem to have precipitated the crime on their part which God had determined to permit for the accomplishment of His gracious designs for the salvation of the world.

They were but the instruments of His good pleasure, and the appointed work was not to be delayed a moment nor its course turned aside a hair's breadth, for any considerations of the fury to which they might be goaded. The fury to which they might be goaded was to be used to the end of bringing about the crime which they were to perpetrate, and through it, the Redemption of the world.

The whole series of events of this most memorable day, on which the series of steps of the Passion of our Lord was, as it were, inaugurated by the solemn procession of Palms, are dwelt on in some detail by all the four Evangelists, though, in this as in many other cases, they do not all mention the same incidents. We gather the whole story from a comparison and juxtaposition of the several narratives. It will be remembered that our Lord had arrived at Bethany on the evening, as it seems, of the Sabbath, probably outstripping for purposes of His own the march of the numerous caravans of pilgrims by whom He had been accompanied on His departure from Jericho. These had followed Him and, as it seems, arrived in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem on the morning after the day on which He reached Bethany. But besides the bands of Galilæans and other pilgrims who were thus collected, and who were eager to do Him special honour, there were in the neighbourhood very considerable bodies of men full of enthusiasm for Him on account of the lately wrought miracle on Lazarus, which had surpassed all His former wonders in magnificence and in the sensation which it had caused, having been wrought in favour of one who was well known in some of the highest circles of society and in the immediate neighbourhood. The effects of this miracle can

hardly be exaggerated, and we have a proof of this in what we are told by St. John—who alone relates it—about the council held shortly after it had taken place, by the Chief Priests and Pharisees. It had produced unanimity among the sects of the Jews, who were generally at variance among themselves, and it had forced them to adopt, as the policy of the whole body of the rulers, an open measure of deliberate murder. It may therefore be well supposed that the public in general of Jerusalem, among whom the miracle was still fresh, were filled with the greatest admiration or fear, respectively, according as they belonged to the class which was ready to believe in our Lord or to that which was obstinate in rejecting Him. Besides the miracle on Lazarus, He had worked many in the immediate neighbourhood of Jerusalem, where before this year he had not been so much known. There were therefore many in the city at this time disposed to believe in Him, and these would form another class of persons who might be expected to welcome Him on His first appearance for the great feast, which was at hand.

The existence of these different classes of believers, or persons ready to believe, in our Lord, is intimated to us in the narratives of the several Evangelists. It is natural to find the earlier Gospels, which make no mention, as has often been said, of occurrences outside the sphere of our Lord's preaching in Galilee, should give no hint as to the effect of the miracle of Lazarus. Thus it seems that the reason why St. John dwells at all on the Day of Palms (which he might naturally omit, as having been related by his predecessors), is that he may supply the deficiency of the history as he found it, having supplied the narrative of the great miracle itself, of which, however, it is

impossible to suppose that the other Evangelists were ignorant. What is thus added by St. John to complete the story of the entrance into Jerusalem is a very important supplement indeed. We thus learn that there were two several classes of people anxious to do honour to our Lord. The first consisted of the more ordinary number of His followers, and those who had known Him in Galilee and elsewhere, and the other of persons dwelling in or near Jerusalem itself, whose enthusiasm had been kindled by His miracles in Judæa, and especially by the crowning and most recent miracle of the raising of Lazarus from the dead. These remarks will enable us more clearly to understand the several details of the Gospel history of the Day of Palms. We first quote the narrative of St. John.

‘And on the next day a great multitude that was come to the festival day, when they had heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet Him, and cried, Hosanna, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel.’² This is a very general description of the incidents, which had already been related by the other Evangelists, and which therefore St. John had no occasion to relate afresh in all their details. But he has added what it was important to add. The words quoted come immediately after the account in St. John of the supper of Bethany. He tells us, after that account, that a great number of the Jews got to know that our Lord was now at Bethany, it having up to that time been doubtful, and a matter of speculation among them, whether He would be present at the feast or not. They came to Bethany on the news of His arrival, ‘and not

² St. John xii. 12, 13.

only that they might see Him, but Lazarus also.' They came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. But the Chief Priests thought to kill Lazarus also because that many of the Jews by reason of him went away and believed in Jesus.' And Jesus found a young ass, and sat upon it, as it is written, 'Fear not, daughter of Sion, behold thy King cometh sitting on an ass's colt. These things His disciples did not know at the first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things to Him. The multitude therefore gave testimony which was with Him when He called Lazarus out of the grave, and raised him from the dead. For which cause also the people came to meet Him, because they had heard that He had done this miracle.'

It appears, then, from St. John's words, that the news of our Lord's arrival at Bethany spread into the city that morning, or late on the previous evening, and that some of the people came to see our Lord and Lazarus as soon as it became known that He was there, others at the same time, who were not able immediately to go to Bethany, preparing themselves to meet our Lord in triumph when He should approach the city. Our Lord knew of their intention, and as He chose from motives of His own Divine wisdom to receive the honour which they intended to show Him, He made His own simple dispositions for the solemnity which He designed to take place. In the meanwhile the multitude of the pilgrims and other disciples would have time to collect. It often happens at such times, when it pleases God that great bodies of men should be gathered by some

holy impulse of enthusiasm and devotion to join in doing Him honour, that without knowing what they are doing, or taking concert together, these crowds find themselves swelling into an immense multitude, and borne on by an irresistible attraction, which supersedes all preparation, and marshalls them in perfect order for the one purpose which animates their hearts. Thus it seems that on leaving Bethany the band of followers of our Lord was small, confined perhaps to the Apostles and the ordinary number which gathered round them. But as they passed on towards the little village of Bethphage, and towards the Mount of Olives, the stream began to swell and the enthusiasm to increase.

Then our Lord gave the word for the preparations of which there was need. On this momentous occasion He acted with masterful and royal authority, although it would have been easy for Him to supply what was wanting to Him in many other ways. But it was now the time to act with power, and claim the rights which were inherent in Him as King of the world. 'He sent two of His disciples, saying, Go into the town which is over against you,' on the other side of the narrow gorge or declivity which separated them from Bethphage, 'at your entering into which you shall find the colt of an ass tied, on which no man hath ever sitten, loose him and bring him hither. And if any man shall say to you, What are you doing, why do you loose him, you shall say thus unto him, Because the Lord hath need of his service, say ye, that the Lord hath need of Him, and immediately he will let him come hither. And going their way, they found the colt tied before the gate without, in the meeting of two ways, and they loose him, and some of them that stood there said to them, the

owners of the colt said to them, Why loose you the colt? What do you loosing the colt? But they said, The Lord hath need of him, as Jesus had commanded them, and they let him go with them.'

St. Matthew tells the story in different words, but to the same purpose as the others. 'Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold thy King cometh to thee, meek, and riding upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of her that is used to the yoke.'³ Having mentioned the presence of an ass as well as her colt in the prophecy which he has quoted, St. Matthew mentions also the presence of the mother in the history, while the other Evangelists, quoting the prophet merely summarily, as is the case with St. John, or not quoting him at all, as is the case with the others, leave out the mother, and mention only the foal, which seems to have been the animal actually used by our Lord. 'And they brought the ass and the colt, and they brought the colt to Jesus, and casting their garments on the colt, they sat Jesus thereon. And as He went they spread their clothes underneath in the way, and a very great multitude spread their garments in the way, and others cut down boughs from the trees, and strewed them in the way. And when He was now coming near the descent of Mount Olivet, the whole multitude of His disciples began with joy to praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works which they had seen, saying, Blessed be the King Who cometh in the name of the Lord, peace in Heaven, and glory on high. And they that went before, and them that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David, Blessed is He that cometh in the

³ *Isaias* lxii. 11; *Zach.* ix. 9.

name of the Lord, Blessed be the kingdom of our father David that cometh, Hosanna in the highest.⁴

It is very likely that the persons who composed the crowd, and even the Apostles themselves who became its involuntary leaders, found themselves borne on by an irresistible impulse, both in what they did and in what they said on this great occasion, so as to become the mouthpieces, so to say, of the Church in all ages, in giving due honour and praise to our Lord. As they little understood the greatness of the occasion itself, what it was that our Lord was about to do, what kind of a kingdom it was that He was now about to found, and what the marvellous Divine acts on which it was to be founded, so also it may be well supposed that they did not understand the words that were put into their mouths as the expressions of the honour and thanksgiving which were due to Him for what He was doing and had done. The words themselves, as we shall see, are, more or less, taken from the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

The word Hosanna is taken from Psalm cxvii., which was sung on solemn occasions by the Jews, and which has a most direct and plain reference almost all through the sacrifice of our Lord. It is translated 'Save us,' or 'Save now,' but seems to mean 'Salvation to the Son of David' in this place. The words, 'Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord,' follow in the same verse in the Psalm. The full meaning which belongs to the words of the crowd was probably not understood by them at the time. They were the highest terms of praise and welcome that they could use, and were accepted by our Lord in their divine meaning in which the Church

⁴ St. Matt. xxi. 4—9; St. Mark xi. 7—10; St. Luke xix. 35—38;
Story of the Gospels, § 132.

understands them when she uses them in the liturgy of the Adorable Sacrifice. They were re-echoed by the multitude, some using one set of expressions, and others using others. As has been said, the word Hosanna seems to include praise, and it may be here in the mouths of the disciples considered as an echo of the song of the angels at Bethlehem, 'Glory to God in the highest!' especially as St. Luke, who relates that angelic song, puts in the word peace as well as glory. The next idea set forth in this song of praise is that which relates to our Lord's own Person. He it is Who is the 'Blessed One Who cometh in the name of the Lord, the King Who cometh in the name of the Lord, the Son of David,' and this is further carried on to the blessing of the kingdom itself. 'Blessed be the kingdom of our father David that cometh.' And the repetition of the former words, with reference to this kingdom, expresses the further truth, that the kingdom embodies and establishes for ever the boons which are thus mentioned. It is the kingdom of peace in Heaven and glory on high, Hosanna in the highest. And the declaration that He that cometh comes in the name of the Lord, implies that He comes not simply in the name of God, but as having been promised and foretold as so coming, bearing with Him the faithful mercies of David, or promises of mercy made to David. Here again the crowds echo unconsciously the words of the Angel to our Blessed Lady at the Annunciation, that our Lord should have given to Him the throne of His father David, and that He should reign in the house of Jacob for ever, and that of His Kingdom there should be no end.⁵

⁵ St. Luke i. 32, 33.

The large class of devout and pious Jews, of whom we may suppose the greater part of the crowd to have been composed, were probably familiar with the language of the Psalms and Prophets, from which these phrases are gathered. But it needed some special guidance of the Holy Ghost to bring them together, just as they are, neither more nor less. We cannot be surprised to find some of the Pharisees, the inveterate enemies of our Lord, among the multitude, and to find them, moreover, at their old occupation of criticizing and fault-finding. The expressions of the disciples were certainly significant of the highest conceptions with regard to our Lord's dignity and Person, and they went far beyond anything that He had up to this time accepted either privately or publicly. When the young ruler had called Him good, He had rebuked him, as if the name belonged only to God. When His enemies had blamed His calling Himself the Son of God, He had quoted the Psalm in which that Name had been used of the servants of God in the Old Testament. But now the time was come when He would permit the use of such words simply, and no longer condescend to explain them away.

The words of the disciples implied His Royal dignity, and, if rightly understood, His Divinity also. If they were not so understood by all who used them, they very clearly and unequivocally signified the kingly rights of His Sacred Humanity, and might, at all events, be used to support the charge that He was making Himself a King. This was the most dangerous claim, in one sense, which could be made for Him, because it might be understood as bringing Him directly in collision with the rights of Cæsar. The Pharisees may have expected, therefore, that

He would pointedly disclaim the power thus attributed to Him. Perhaps, at an earlier period of His Ministry, He would not have allowed His disciples so to speak. But here we come upon another instance of our Lord's change of demeanour and attitude towards His enemies. Instead of bidding His disciples modify their language, or of excusing them to their critics, He answered by approving their words in the plainest way. 'He said to them, I say to you, if these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out!'

These words seem to imply that the occasion was one on which it was so becoming that God should be praised in some unusual way, that if those remained silent, for whose benefit such great mercies were vouchsafed, the inanimate creation itself would be fain to take voice, in order that the glories of God should not be unsung. Man is the creature in the universe who alone, with the exception of the Angels, can give God intelligent praise, and this praise is a duty which he is bound to perform, because he has received the power of performing it. His mind and heart are given him for this purpose, that he may recognize his Maker's claim, reading His wonderful works and giving thanks for them, in heart and in tongue. It is the duty of the other creatures to render Him unintelligent praise, by obeying the laws of their being which He has given them, and taking each the part which belongs to it in the great symphony of the universe. Man alone below can rise to the intelligence of the works of God, and it is consequently a duty of his being to praise Him, and draw out that magnificent revelation of Himself which He has made in Creation and Providence. But of all the great

works and manifestations of Himself by God, there is none so worthy of eternal and immeasurable praise as that work of Redemption which was to be accomplished within the next few days in the Holy City.

When the first creation was wrought, as we are told in the Book of Job, 'The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God made a joyful melody.'⁶ On the present occasion, as the great counsel of Redemption was unfolded before the eyes of the blessed Angels, we cannot doubt that they burst forth into songs of joy and thanksgiving, which were not less magnificent and rapturous than those with which they had celebrated the physical creation. When man had been created, it had been his first duty to re-echo on earth the praises of Heaven. And now that all Heaven was in a blaze of joy and wonder at the work of Redemption, it was not to be thought of that the voices of men on earth should not be lifted up, to take part in the celebration of mercies of which earth was the immediate scene and man the immediate recipient. In any case the debt of praise was to be paid, and the men who were being blamed for now paying it, in their poor way, were but discharging, however inadequately, what was the duty of the whole world.

Some holy writers say the words of our Lord had an actual fulfilment in the witness that was borne, a few days later than this, by the physical creation itself, to our Lord on the Cross. Then the voices of men were hushed in silence, but the sun and moon that withdrew their light, the earth that was shaken, the rocks that were rent and gave up their dead, the veil of the Temple that was torn from the top to the bottom, gave witness to the greatness of

⁶ Job xxxviii. 7.

Him Who was dying on the Cross. This is a kind of fulfilment of the words before us. They seem more naturally to mean that the people who were blamed for praising Him on this occasion were not doing anything that required reproof. Rather they were occupied in a duty that was so fitting and necessary at the time, that God would have had to work a miracle to supply their deficiency if they had not done it. Instead of an exaggeration of ill-timed praise which was not due, they were paying to their Lord and God a small and inadequate tribute of honour which the universe was bound to render Him then and there, and which it could not altogether omit without failing to discharge, in a way that was inconceivable, the end for which it was made. Those few voices on the slopes of Mount Olivet ought to have been echoed from pole to pole, and from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same. Instead of blame falling on them, the whole world was guilty for not joining them. God could not have allowed this in the creation which He had made, and so, if it had been possible that His Providence could have suffered them to be silent, He would have had to give voices to the stones themselves in order that His praises should not be unsung.

Thus the words of these Jewish cavillers at the simple enthusiasm of the disciples were met by our Lord in a manner which they could hardly have expected. Our Lord's language implies indeed that He felt indignation as well as they did. But it was indignation at the silence of the synagogue and its rulers, the official mouthpieces of the praises and thanksgivings of the chosen people, a silence which now in the Providence of His Father had been in

some measure compensated by that very tribute of homage and adoration on the part of the people of which they had complained. He had now been so many years among them, in fulfilment of a long series of prophecies which ought to have prepared them for Him, as well as with a constant flow of miracles of mercy to point Him out as the Messenger of God, and what had they done to show Him honour? It had been the same from the beginning, a long history of neglect, indifference, contempt, rejection, on the part of those who of all men were the most bound to be vigilant in discerning and eloquent in giving thanks for His long train of ineffable mercies and benefits. And God had continually provided those who might take their place in the discharge of the duties of which they were so neglectful. At His entrance into the world the Shepherds of Bethlehem had been the chosen worshippers to honour Him, when the priests of His Temple knew nothing of His presence. The Wise Princes of the East, who had no part in the inheritance of Israel, came from afar to honour Him, while Jerusalem could tell them where He was to be born, but could not find time to see if His birth had taken place. When He sent His messenger before His face to prepare His way by the preaching of penance, the leaders of the people turned away with coldness, and the poor multitudes, who felt their own need of remission, formed the bulk of those who welcomed him, as they were afterwards to form the bulk of those who welcomed our Lord Himself. The publicans and sinners heard both our Lord and St. John gladly, while the Scribes and Pharisees found fault with our Lord for receiving them with such condescension and affability.

So the history of the honour due to God had gone on—alas! it still goes on, and will till the end of time. The Gentiles take the place of the Jews, and nation after nation from among the still unconverted heathen has to be called into the fold, to take the place of those Christians who fall away therefrom, either because they will not believe what the Church teaches, or because they will not obey the Divine precept of unity. The words that describe His reception at the first, are always true even unto the last ages of the world. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. And then others are called in who are more humble and more docile, that the house of the great King may be filled with guests. To these strangers from without He gives power that they may be made the sons of God, instead of those who had proved themselves ungrateful for their high vocation.

It will naturally occur to us how aptly the thoughts which are suggested by these words of our Lord, concerning the stones crying out, harmonize with those others which were used to the proud and ungrateful Jews at the beginning of the Gospel, when St. John told them not to build on the fact that they had Abraham to their father, because God was able of those stones to raise up children unto Abraham. They also prepare very beautifully for the incident of which we are next told by the same compassionate Evangelist who has preserved the words of our Lord on which we have been dwelling. The remarks of the Pharisees in criticism on the enthusiasm of the disciples with which these Pharisees found so much fault, must have put before our Lord's mind the whole history, as has been said, of the treatment which He had received from the

authorities of the holy nation, and this would naturally suggest the mournful thought of the retribution which was to fall on them in consequence. Their neglect and coldness was soon to appear to all the world ripened into the blackest hostility, and at last into the crime of His murder, which was to bring on the nation and city a temporal chastisement, such as the world has never heard of before or since that time.

Just at that point of the procession which was moving on to Jerusalem, we are told that a turn of the road round one of the shoulders of the Mount of Olives, spread before the eyes of our Lord the sight of the beautiful city itself in all its magnificence, bathed in the warm glow of the afternoon sun. Jerusalem had never been more glorious to outward show than at that time of her history, when the restorations of the Temple by Herod had lately been completed with great splendour. It lay there before our Lord, with all its towers and pinnacles, its golden roof and marble porticoes, hiding all the sin and ingratitude that had been, and the far greater sin that was to be accomplished within so short a number of days, in the blaze of its splendour, as if angels had built its walls and none but saints had thronged its courts. Could anything be more worthy of the majesty of Him for Whom it was built? Alas! the show was fair indeed, and there were no longer the outward abominations of idolatry in the Temple and the city which had been shown in the vision to Ezechiel. 'Every form of creeping things and of living creatures, the abominations and all the idols of the house of Israel painted on the wall round about . . . seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel that stood before the pictures, and every one

a censer in his hand, and a cloud of smoke that went up from the incense . . . and women sat there mourning for Adonis . . . and five and twenty men having their backs towards the Temple of the Lord and their faces to the east, and they adored towards the rising of the sun.'⁷ Those visible abominations were done away after the great chastisement of the Captivity, but what were they in comparison to the guilt of the murder of the Incarnate Son of God, which was already accomplished in the hearts of the Chief Priests, and in which the very people that were now crying Hosanna were so soon to claim their part in the fearful cry, 'His Blood be on us and on our children?' And when He drew near, seeing the city, He wept over it, saying, 'If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace, but now they are hidden from thy eyes! For the days shall come upon thee, and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee and compass thee round and straiten thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground and thy children who are in thee, and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone, because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation.'

The words of our Lord breathe all the mercifulness and compassionateness of His Sacred Heart. Mere human feeling might have prompted some re-creation, some expression of satisfaction at the revenge which they were heaping up for themselves, by their crimes against Him, some denunciation of just punishment and the like. Or He might have dwelt on His own great torments, which were more immediately future than the long-delayed vengeance which was to be meted out to them in the justice of

⁷ Ezechiel viii. 10—16.

God. Instead of these feelings, He has only tears for the calamities of the people. The image before His mind is that of the miserable city fallen into the hands of her enemies, the trench dug round her, the wall beaten down, and the devastation so complete that not a stone is left upon a stone. He is silent about their cruelties to Himself, and even about their ingratitude to God, and He attributes their evil fate not so much to sin as to ignorance—‘because thou hast not known the day time of thy visitation.’ It is like His first word from the Cross, ‘Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they do,’ and it anticipates the strain of compassionateness which is uniformly observed, even in the reproaches of the Apostles after the Day of Pentecost, when they dwell on the ignorance of the people and of their rulers, at the same time that they reproach them with their murder of our Lord.

We should remember that, in the eyes of God, there is always this side in all human sin, although at the same time the guilt remains and the punishment is exacted—the ignorance of the enormity and the partial though still culpable blindness of the sinner. It is this latter which forces God, as we are so often told, to withdraw more and more of the light which has been neglected or misused, and which is called at one time His hardening of the heart, and another the wilful hardening of the heart on their own part. When Holy Scripture speaks of the justice of God, it is the sinner that hardens his heart and turns away from light. When it speaks of the misery and affliction of the sinner, it is the ignorance and blindness which make him so great an enemy to himself, and the worker out of his own destruction without fully knowing what he does. And our Lord’s words

imply the truth of the long-suffering and patient mercy of God, Who waits so long to see if men will even at the last moment recognize His gracious visitation and allow themselves to be saved by Him. For it seems to be signified that, even then, it was not too late for the wicked city to find peace and salvation from Him, and also that there is a last limit to His forbearance, a moment when the cup is at last filled to the brim and will indeed overflow in vengeance, because the measure of sin is consummated.

‘And when He was come in to Jerusalem the whole city was moved, saying, Who is this? And the people said, This is Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth in Galilee.’ They had used language far higher concerning Him when they had sung their hosannas about the Son of David, the King that cometh in the name of the Lord, and the like. Then they were carried away by a Divine impulse and scarcely measured their words or knew what they were saying. Now they estimate His greatness more modestly, and are content with the simple statement, which was true indeed, but also far short of the truth. St. Mark tells us that ‘He entered into Jerusalem to the Temple, and having viewed all things round about, when now the eventide was come, He went out to Bethania with the Twelve.’ St. Matthew, who writes more concisely here, and gives an historical summary of the events rather according to their importance than according to the order of time, places immediately after the entrance into the Temple the cleansing of the same Temple by our Lord. But it seems clear enough, from the accounts of St. Mark and St. Luke, that it was not on this day of His solemn entry into Jerusalem and the

Temple that the cleansing took place. It appears to have been on the afternoon of the day after His arrival at Bethany that the Procession of Palms was made, and that the Temple was purged on the following day. Our Lord was now occupied on a Divine act, that of presenting Himself to His Eternal Father as the Lamb of the great Sacrifice, the true Pasch, which was to be separated and put aside so as to be kept for four days before the actual Sacrifice. The shades of evening were already falling when He reached the city, for the procession of so many people, which seems to have traversed a space of about three miles in all, would take some time, and there was time also before it began for the news of His arrival at Bethany to reach the city, and for the crowds who met Him, as distinct from those who followed Him, to assemble and flock to the place where they heard He was. There are, however, some incidents which we gather both from St. Matthew and St. John, which remain to be related before we close our account of the Day of Palms.

The first of these incidents is an act of mercy. 'And there came to Him the blind and the lame in the Temple, and He healed them.' For the Temple was a place to which the people thronged all day long for worship, especially at such times as the days before a great feast, and the duration of the feast itself, and at such times especially we might expect to find that the blind and the lame would be brought to the doors of the sacred enclosure to receive the alms of those who went in and out. This was the case with the blind men mentioned in the Gospels and Acts—the man born blind whom our Lord healed, and the lame man healed by St. Peter at the Beautiful gate of the Temple. So when our

Lord on this occasion had entered the Temple and looked all round, as if inspecting the house of His Father, it is natural that the little crowd of daily mendicants would gather round Him, and that He would in His great compassion heal them. The Chief Priests would be there, cowed by the unusual and unexpected demonstration of the enthusiasm of the disciples that they had seen, and yet ever ready to find fault and put questions. With them are mentioned also another set of worshippers, the children who had accompanied the procession. These children were never tired of repeating the joyful cries with which it had entered Jerusalem, even after they had ceased to be repeated by the greater part of the multitude, who do not seem to have accompanied our Lord into the Temple itself. All the more would the children shout, if they saw our Lord manifesting His power in favour of the lame and the blind.

This, then, quite accounts for what St. Matthew here says, 'And the Chief Priests and the Scribes seeing the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying in the Temple and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David, were moved with indignation, and said to Him, Hearest Thou what these say? And Jesus said to them, Yea, have you never read, Out of the mouth of infants and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise? And leaving them He went out of the city unto Bethania, and remained there.' It was always our Lord's way to speak in defence of those who were blamed, especially if they were found fault with for anything that concerned the honour of God or for any service to Himself. He was thus in a manner bound to defend the children who were so importunate in rendering Him honour, at the

time when the official representatives of the sacred nation and even the authorities of the sanctuary were silent, or cavillers at those who paid it to Him. Thus we may suppose that at any time of His ministry He would have found a word to say in defence of the children who were blamed for praising Him. But at the time which we have now reached, He had laid aside His usual reserve and silence in His own vindication and as to His own claims, and He was now acting in a royal way, rather defying and braving His enemies than paying any heed to their objections and remonstrances. So He simply spoke in a manner which showed that He entirely approved of the language which the children used concerning Him, and accepted it as a true witness to His rights. He did this by showing them that the Scriptures had foretold that His praises should be sung by children, and that it was the plan of God, by means of their praises to confute and silence His enemies and the cavillers against His honour. 'Have you never read, Out of the mouth of infants and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise?'

This answer seems at first sight a simple rebuke of their objecting and cavilling spirit, flinging at them, as it were, a text of the Psalms which directly contradicted them. But the place from which His quotation was taken belonged to a prophetic psalm, and, as is constantly the case with His quotations, seems to contain a whole head of doctrine which was peculiarly appropriate to the occasion, and which might have led them to the truths which it was at the time most necessary for them to remember. The Psalm from which He quotes, which we know as the *Domine Dominus noster*,⁸ speaks generally of the

⁸ Psalm viii.

revelation of God which is contained in the physical universe, the things that meet the eyes and ears of men. It seems to teach us that that revelation is so clear and unmistakeable, for the very purpose of making it intelligible to the capacity of the children of men, who are the weakest and dumbest by nature of the intelligent creatures of God, and who can yet grasp this teaching concerning Him, and thereby put to shame the proud enemies of God, the rebel angels, in this manner giving Him a peculiar glory. And we know that our Blessed Lord was fond of dwelling on this thought, and making it a matter of praise and thanksgiving to His Father, that He had chosen in this sense the weak things of the world to confound the strong, the foolish, and untaught, to put to shame the prudent and wise in their own eyes.

It adds to the glory of God, when He has revealed Himself so marvellously, that the revelation should be hidden from those who had keen perceptions and discernments of their own to boast of among the gifts of their nature, and made manifest on the other hand to the weaklings and sucklings of the intellectual creation. For it thus becomes manifest that no creature can boast in His Presence, that those who did not acknowledge Him failed to do this by their own pride which blinded them, and those who gave Him His due glory were enabled to do so by His grace. The Psalm speaks of this arrangement of Providence as having been made for the sake of destroying and confuting the 'enemies of God and the avengers,' by whom it seems that the fallen angels and their instruments on earth among men are meant. Our Lord does not expressly quote these words, because it seems that He rather wishes to draw the attention of the Scribes and Pharisees

to their danger, than openly to upbraid and irritate them more. But the scene in the Temple was quite an exemplification of the truth expressed in the Psalm. For the Scribes and Pharisees were those who should have been the first to give honour to God on this occasion, and as they were mute, and failed to give glory to God, the children were moved to do it in their place. In this sense the children crying in the Temple are a commentary on what He had just before said in the course of the procession, that if the people held their peace the stones would cry out.

Moreover, our Lord seems to have in His mind the great part which children and those like them in spirit would have to discharge in His Kingdom, the great amount of the praise and glorification of God which would be committed to them, which was greatly to be increased in the Catholic Church, although it had not been unknown in the former dispensations of God. We have already touched on this subject elsewhere in the course of these volumes. In the first place it was the design of the Incarnation to multiply very greatly indeed the numbers of the children who were to pass out of this world to glorify God for ever in the Heavenly Kingdom by virtue alone of the regeneration received in Baptism, not having attained the age when they have become responsible for their actions, and so liable to sin. It cannot be doubted that the numbers of such children have been immensely greater since the foundation of the Church, nor again, that the numbers that have received Christian Baptism actually have been far less than they might have been in the intention of God, if the obstacles which have hindered the conquest of the

world by the Church had not been so deplorably increased by the negligence and perversity of men. Then again we must remember the immense graces of which all baptized children are capable, and the great heights of sanctity to which countless Christian children have been actually raised, with all the great glory to God which has been the result in Heaven and on earth. Christian children have had the grace of martyrdom, they have borne witness to our Lord in torments and in the face of temptation far above their age, they have confuted and confounded the sages of the world, as well as resisted all its seductions and its threats, they have defied openly the demons who are its rulers.⁹ This incident of the children in the Temple is one of those which we may consider to have been of especial consolation to the Sacred Heart of our Lord.

St. John adds another incident of a similar kind, which had been passed over in the rapid histories of the former Evangelists. 'The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Do you see that we prevail nothing? Behold, the whole world is gone after Him.' It may well be supposed that they had been taken by surprise by the Procession of Palms. Nothing of the sort had ever happened before in the course of our Lord's preaching, and now the great demonstration had come upon them of a sudden, showing what they would consider some aggressiveness on the part of our Lord Himself, as well as an amount of enthusiasm among the people which must have galled them exceedingly. St. John tells us of a circumstance of a very different kind, but which still reveals the widespread interest which was felt in

⁹ See the chapter on 'Our Lord and the Children,' *Preaching of the Cross*, part iii. (*Public Life*, vol. xi.), p. 152.

Him. 'Now there were certain Gentiles among them who came up to adore on the festival day. These therefore came to Philip, who was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew. Again, Andrew and Philip told Jesus.' Philip and Andrew are mentioned in conjunction on the occasion of the feeding of the five thousand, and we may almost suppose that they had some office among the disciples which made it their business to settle little matters of detail, such as the provision of food, or the admission of chance strangers to our Lord. On this occasion it is clear that the request made was something unusual, and that neither of the two Apostles would venture to act without communicating with Him. It is probable that these Gentiles were not Jews of the Dispersion, but really heathen, who had become acquainted with the Law of God from their communications with some of the foreign Jews, and that they had not been made proselytes, though they believed in the One God, and followed the Law as to the moral commandments. Their introduction to our Lord, Who was not sent, as He said, but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, would therefore be something altogether unusual, although we do not doubt that His Sacred Heart yearned with an intense desire for their salvation, and longed for the time when they might be admitted to His Church.

This, then, forms a last and most touching incident in this day of strange triumphs and joys mingled with mourning. It seems clear that although the mass of the crowd which had taken part in the Procession of Palms had melted away after our Lord had reached Jerusalem, or at least after He

had entered the Temple, there were still a great number of people about Him. The approach of night would send many of them to their homes, or resting-places during their short sojourn in the city, while the most devoted of them would linger longer, especially after the apparent opposition of the Pharisees. And the near approach of the short twilight seems to be alluded to in the words of our Lord which follow.

‘But Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come that the Son of Man shall be glorified. Amen, amen, I say to you, unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world, keepeth it unto life eternal. If any man minister unto Me, let him follow Me, that where I am, there also shall My servant be. If any man minister to Me, him will My Father honour. Now is My soul troubled. And what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour? but for this cause I came unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy Name. A voice therefore came from Heaven, I have both glorified it and will glorify it again. The multitude therefore that stood and heard said that it thundered. Others said, An Angel spoke to Him. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of Me, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of the world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself. Now this He said signifying by what death He should die. The multitude answered Him, We have heard out of the Law that Christ abideth for ever, and how sayest Thou, The Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?

Jesus therefore said to them, Yet a little while and the light is among you. Walk whilst you have the light that the darkness overtake you not. And he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. Whilst you have the light, believe in the light, that you may be the children of the light. These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them.' ¹⁰

It has been already said that these Gentiles were not persons who had been admitted into the commonwealth of Israel, as St. Paul speaks. They were not strictly 'proselytes of justice,' as it was said—not circumcised, and bound to the whole Law of Moses. Thus they were technically outside the fold to which our Lord's Personal Mission lay. Our Lord does not speak to them directly, nor is anything said about the result of their application to the two Apostles. But in any case their presence would bring before the Sacred Heart the immense results which were to follow from the Sacrifice of the Cross, which was so soon to be consummated, and which may be said to have been begun on this Day of Palms, when that solemn offering was accomplished which was pre-shadowed by the separation of the Paschal Lamb, which a few days after was to be sacrificed. Merely humanly speaking, the Day of Palms must have brought the Passion nearer, for it must have aggravated the hostile feeling on the part of the Scribes and Pharisees, and perhaps have added fuel to the flame of rancorous malice already burning in the heart of Judas. Far greater than these circumstances in significance, was the solemn offering of Himself to the work of the Passion which our Lord

¹⁰ St. John xii. 20—36.

had made in the Temple to His Father. Thus the approach of these Gentiles may have fitted in to the thoughts already in the Sacred Heart, and filled our Lord with the joyous anticipation of the fruit which was to spring from their sacrifice. These Gentiles were to His Heart the first-fruits of the great Church of the Gentiles which was to be gathered into His fold by the labours of St. Paul and the glorious band of his followers in the Apostolate. At the same time, the moment for their reception by Him was not yet come, and He seems to have spoken the words which are here recorded, in their presence, without directly addressing them.

The words may be compared to the others spoken under somewhat similar circumstances, on the very different though similar occasion of the approach to Him of the Samaritans, as recorded in the earlier part of this same Gospel of St. John.¹¹ In both cases our Lord was looking forward, and the persons of whom He spoke or thought, were, as has been said, outside the range of His Personal Mission. At that earlier time, moreover, the Passion was yet distant, and He had not spoken of it except in the most enigmatical manner, even to the future Apostles. A comparison of the passages will bring out the parallelism as well as the distinction, between the words of our Lord. On the first occasion He had spoken of the readiness of the fields for the harvest, which was represented to the eye by the approach of the Samaritans through the cornfields, which were already white unto harvest. He spoke prophetically of the work among these very Samaritans, of the Apostles then present with Him, when shortly after His Ascension St. Peter and St. John had been sent to

¹¹ St. John iv.

accomplish the work, which had been begun in Samaria by the deacon St. Philip. There is nothing about the grain of corn sinking into the earth and dying, but simply the doctrine of the unity of work and the variety of persons who have a share in it. 'He that reapeth receiveth wages and gathereth fruit unto life everlasting, that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. For in this is the saying true, that it is one man that soweth and it is another that reapeth. I have sent you to reap that in which you did not labour; others have laboured and you have entered into their labours.'

The difference between the discourses is the difference between the various times at which they were spoken, and the state of mind of the Apostles at those two different times. Now our Lord could speak openly of the cost at which the salvation of the heathen was to be wrought. The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified. The glory of the Son of Man began in the Passion, as our Lord said when Judas had gone forth from the Cenacle. 'Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in Him,' and again, when Himself about to leave the same Cenacle for the last time before His actual Sacrifice, 'Father, the hour is come, glorify Thy Son that Thy Son may glorify Thee.' There were to be many different stages in the process of this glorification, but this was the commencement of all. The hour was now come, because, as has been said, the solemn offering of Himself had just been made in the Temple. He goes on at once to thoughts which could not be put forward on that former occasion of the Samaritan preaching. 'Amen, amen, I say to you, unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone, but if it die, it bringeth

forth much fruit.' And now that the extension of His Kingdom was so near and its promise almost before His eyes, in the persons of the Gentiles, the rejoicing thought rose up in His mind which these words express.

At the same time our Lord seems to have passed on in thought to those who were to be His instruments in the great work, as is the case on the former occasion. But now it is no longer the reapers and sowers who rise to His mind as such, but the ministers of the Word, who have to labour after the pattern of their Master, and if not lay down their lives like their Master. It is to be true of them as well as of Himself, and it is to be true to the end of time, that 'unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die itself remaineth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.' Not all the ministers of the Word of God are actually to die for their work, but a great proportion of them are to die actually, and the rest are to die in spirit though not actually. And the fruitfulness of the Word depends on their mortification, as well as on the death of their Master, which is the source of all fruitfulness. He did not then speak of Himself only, but of the general law of the Kingdom, which exacts the sacrifice of the ministers by whom the Word is preached. 'He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world, keepeth it unto life eternal. If any man minister unto Me, let him follow Me, and where I am there shall also My minister be.' These words correspond, in the present discourse, to those which He had before uttered about those that sow and those that reap rejoicing together. It is something greater for the servant to be where our Lord Himself is for ever, than for those who sow and those

who reap to rejoice together. And He goes on to something still greater. 'If any man minister to Me, him will My Father honour.' The Son Himself is to be glorified, and a part of His glorification is to consist in the honouring of His servants for the work which is accomplished by them through and for Him.

'Now is My soul troubled. And what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour? But for this cause I came to this hour. Father, glorify Thy Name. A voice therefore came from Heaven, I have both glorified it and will glorify it again. The multitude therefore that stood and heard, said that it thundered. Others said, An angel hath spoken to Him. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of Me, but for your sakes.' For our Lord was constantly on the watch to exclude the possibility of their forming inadequate opinions concerning Him, as if He were a mere man, when any supernatural manifestation on the part of His Father occurred. Thus, in the miracle of Lazarus, when He gave thanks to His Father for hearing Him, He added, 'I know that Thou hearest Me always, but because of the people who stand around I have said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me.' And He does not meet the supposition about the Angel speaking to Him, for the words were the words of the Father, although the sounds may have been formed in the air by the ministration of angels, as is ordinarily the case at such times, and it may not have seemed to Him worth while to explain how far they were the words of His Father and how far those of an angel.

He then went on to speak summarily of the momentous occasion on which the words had been

spoken. It was nothing less than a voice from Heaven of the Eternal Father, which had not been vouchsafed, save on two other occasions in the Gospel history, as far as we are told, at the Baptism by St. John, and at the Transfiguration. Now the Eternal Father declared from Heaven He both had glorified and would further glorify His Name, we may suppose, by the manifestation of the Day of Palms, among the other mysteries of the Life of our Lord, and that He would carry out to the full the gracious counsel, the accomplishment of which had been foreshadowed and promised by what had taken place that day. Never before had there been so public a proclamation of the Divine Kingdom of our Lord, never before had such words been put into the mouths of men, as had been heard on that day from the crowds who sang Hosanna to the Son of David, to Him that was coming in the name of the Lord. Our Lord commented aloud on these words of His Eternal Father for the benefit of the bystanders, among whom we may suppose that the Gentiles had taken their place.

‘Now is the judgment of the world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out.’ These words of our Lord may be understood in two different ways, according to the sense that is attached to the word world, and to the word judgment. For in the establishment of the Heavenly Kingdom the world was judged, in the sense that the wickedness and infidelity and worship of material goods as the only true goods which are presented to mankind, have thereby passed on them the sentence of condemnation which naturally follows on the declaration and manifestation of the truth. All that is in the world, says St. John, is the concupiscence of the flesh and the

concupiscence of the eyes, and the false pride and imposture of life, and these are exposed in their full falsehood by the manifestation of the truth. In this sense the judgment of the world takes place whenever the Divine truth is manifested and declared. But the passage before us seems to require some more special signification, belonging to the particular step or stage in the establishment of the Kingdom of God with which we now have to do. The stage or step in the re-establishment of the Divine Kingdom, which is set before us in the triumph of the Day of Palms, and the mysteries with which that is connected, must have some close connection with the great counsel of redemption which was brought so near its accomplishment on this day, when the true Paschal Victim was solemnly set apart for the Sacrifice, and the Sacrifice itself so far begun.

We may therefore follow the interpretation of those commentators who see in these words of our Lord a reference to the deliverance of the world from the bondage of Satan, who is the prince of whom our Lord speaks as being cast out. In this sense the judgment of the world is the judicial freeing of the world from the servitude in which it before lay to Satan. He was its prince, not by any inherent right of his own, but by usurpation, permitted judicially by God as a punishment for the sin which had been contracted by Adam, and which bound all his posterity. The sin had been an act of rebellion against God, the true King and Prince of the world, and its penalty was the subjection of the world to the dominion of Satan, in the sense that without the grace of Jesus Christ, the future Redeemer, no one was able to escape the bondage of sin and the consequent sentence of eternal death. The world lay

in the power of Satan, and was now to be delivered from that power, and this sentence is called by our Lord the judgment of the world, the judgment by which its deliverance was made secure. God had allowed the usurpation of Satan, and while He might, if it had pleased Him, have set the world free from this tyranny by a simple act of grace and mercy, He chose to accomplish the deliverance by an act of justice. The Son of God became Man, and Satan, as we are so often told in Scripture, had no right or authority over Him, not even the false right and authority which he had been allowed to usurp in the case of the wicked and rebellious world. In laying his hands on our Lord, and treating Him like others, as the slave of his power, Satan had overreached himself, and by so doing had forfeited his power over those who were guilty in the sense in which our Lord was not and could not be guilty. Thus the world was delivered and snatched from the hands of the enemy, not by any justice or innocence or merit of its own, but by the innocence and holiness and justice of Christ, for Whose sake it was now set free and brought into the liberty and light of the Gospel. In this sense the Passion of our Lord was the judgment of the world, by which the world was delivered from the servitude of the devil, so that he ceased to have the kind of right over it which he had before been allowed to usurp, in consequence of its rebellion against its lawful and true Lord, that is, God.

‘Now shall the prince of this world be cast out.’ For the power of Satan was great indeed over the world, without the grace that was always available from the beginning through faith in the promised Redeemer, and he was almost in peaceable posses-

sion, as our Lord describes him in the parable, 'The strong man armed who keepeth his court, and his goods are in peace.' Now a stronger than he was to come upon him and take away his armour in which he trusted, and despoil his goods. He was to be cast out, for the redemption wrought by our Lord does away with the fictitious right which he claimed, and does away also with the power which he in fact exercised over mankind, which, whether we speak of it as a right or as an usurpation, was immense and almost unlimited, filling the whole of society with its dominion. From one end of the earth to the other it was dominant, it had taken the place of the true God and His worship, and the infinite degradation and corruption which it had engendered had almost banished purity, justice, and humanity from the globe. The redemption of the world by our Lord did not at once destroy the works of the devil, nor is the kingdom of Satan as yet thoroughly overthrown. But it has been shaken to its foundations, it was shaken to its foundations within a few years or generations of the Sacrifice of the Cross, and the power that was manifested in its destruction, as far as it took place, was evidently a power capable of a more complete and universal victory, if the will of man had been determined that the overthrow of Satan should be complete in every part. What remains of the kingdom of Satan is partly a witness to the miserable weakness of will which prevents man from working out his full deliverance from the bondage of the evil one, and partly it is left as a proof and trial to the virtue of Christians, who need something to contend against and to suffer from, in order that they may win their crowns after the example of their Master and His saints.

‘And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things unto Myself.’ Now this He said, signifying what death He should die. These words seem to have been understood by the crowd as having reference to our Lord’s death, for they proceed at once to put the question to Him as if they so understood them. ‘The multitude answered Him, We have heard out of the Law that Christ abideth for ever, and how sayest Thou, The Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?’ Some have thought that the words of the multitude imply that our Lord had said something more, both about the Son of Man, and about His being lifted up in death. It is well known that the expression the Son of Man is but seldom used in this Gospel of St. John, in comparison with the other Gospels, but it has been used just before this passage, when our Lord had said that the hour was come in which the Son of Man was to be glorified. It seems to have been a common phrase in the mouth of our Lord, and the infrequency of its occurrence in this particular Gospel may be accounted for in more ways than one.

But it is also certainly remarkable that the words of the multitude in this place seem to show us that St. John has given us just enough of what was now spoken to suit the purpose which he had in view in the narrative, and no more. It is clear that they must have understood our Lord to be speaking of His death. It is not absolutely necessary to suppose that some words are omitted, because our Lord had on other occasions used the same image of His death. He had said to Nicodemus, ‘As Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him

may not perish, but have life everlasting.'¹² And again, in His great teaching in the Temple during the feast of Tabernacles, and therefore not very long before this time, He had said to His enemies, 'When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall you know that I am He.'¹³ It is possible that we have very imperfect notions of the manner in which the words of our Lord were caught and treasured up by those who heard Him. Thus they may have fixed themselves in the memory even of men who were perplexed and imperfect in their faith. So that this expression of our Lord about lifting up, in the sense of death, may have been known as one that He was continually using on occasions of which we have no direct record. To the common people it may have signified only that He was to be removed in some way or other. For they seem to have understood that what He said was contradictory to the common ideas concerning Christ, Who was to abide for ever. They did not understand the full meaning of the favourite expression of the Son of Man, and much less therefore would they easily comprehend the truth of the Incarnation of the Son of God and His sacrifice of Himself for the sins of the world. This our Lord proceeds very shortly to speak of, though His words are very few, and refer chiefly to the danger of their losing the short opportunity which still remained to them of His presence among them as their Teacher. For the Holy Week had already begun, and the few hours of His teaching in the Temple would be all that remained of the blessed time when they could listen to the words of His mouth.

'And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw

¹² St. John iii. 34.

¹³ St. John viii. 28.

all things unto Myself.' The words seem to be suggested by what has been said before about the prince of this world being cast out, as if it were meant that our Lord Himself was to become the true Prince and King of the world, in the place of the usurper who had been cast out. They mean, then, that in His Sacred Humanity our Lord is the true King of the world, as well as in His Divine Nature as God, One with the Father and the Holy Ghost. And they express also the truth that in His Sacred Humanity our Lord has a power of attractiveness which conquers the hearts of men, who become His servants not simply on account of the majesty of His Godhead, but by the love which wins their hearts and entrances their affections. 'Yet a little while, and the light is among you. Walk while you have the light, that the darkness overtake you not. And he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. Whilst you have the light, believe in the light, that you may be the children of the light. These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them,' going out, as we know, to Bethany, and showing Himself openly only in the day, and when the people were present, on account of the danger with which His steps were haunted from the Chief Priests. Their hour was not yet come, though it was at hand, and it was not in the counsels of God that it should be anticipated.

Thus, at the close of this the first day of His public presence in Jerusalem, our Lord could retire to Bethany and leave the effect of what had passed in these few hours, to work upon the minds both of the people and of His enemies. There can be little doubt that few of all the days of His sacred Ministry could have left deeper traces on the public mind.

The Chief Priests were startled and thoroughly alarmed by the events of the day. Our Lord had fulfilled a great prophecy, which they acknowledged to belong to the Messiah, in the most astonishing manner. The King had come, meek, and riding upon an ass, and had filled the whole city with the magnificence of His Presence. He had accepted the homage of the multitudes as the Son of David, and when asked to rebuke His followers He had justified and praised them instead. But to Him the great act of the day was the offering of Himself as the victim to His Father's justice as the sacrifice for the sins of the world. This had been a matter of great rejoicing to the Sacred Heart, which had had Its sorrows also to bear in the obduracy of His enemies, their cavils at the words of the crowd and at the praises of the little children, for that kind of carping fault-finding spirit left little hope of their own conversion. He had also to weep over the beloved city of Jerusalem, and the thoughts of His own triumph had been blended into those of the guilt which was to bring about its doom. Another consolation to the Sacred Heart would have been the application of the Gentiles to be allowed to see Him. He had strictly kept to the rule of this one mission from the Father in not welcoming them openly. But all the more would His Heart rejoice in the promise which that application involved of the future glories of the Gentile Church.

In the passage of Zacharias which is fulfilled by the entry into Jerusalem, there is much that follows on the words which the Evangelists quote, which seems to refer to the universal extension of His Kingdom, especially among the Gentiles. Nor is it at all certain, although some modern critics do not follow the

Fathers in finding in the same passage some words which imply His triumph even in the world beyond the grave, that the passage has not that meaning. 'Thou also by the Blood of Thy testament hast sent forth Thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water. Return ye to the stronghold ye prisoners of hope, I will render thee double as I declare to-day.'¹⁴ In any case, the day had been full of triumphs in His love for souls, far dearer to the Sacred Heart than the acclamations of the simple and fickle multitude. One thing was quite settled now. The attitude of our Lord was perfectly different from that which He had hitherto assumed towards the Chief Priests and Pharisees. There had been speculations as to His coming to the feast at all. Now He had come up in a royal manner. It was thought that He might hide Himself. Now there was no appearance in Him of any avoidance of publicity. He had spoken before enigmatically about His claims. Now there was no doubt about His claim to be a King. And the marvellous power that was in Him was shown conspicuously by the fact that no one had dared to touch Him or to interfere with Him, and that His most powerful enemies had shrunk back instinctively before Him.

¹⁴ Zach. ix. 11, 12. Cf. 1 St. Peter iii. 18, 19.

CHAPTER III.

The Barren Fig-tree.

St. Matt. xxi. 19—22 ; St. Mark xi. 13—26 ; St. Luke xix. 45—48 ;
Story of the Gospels, § 134.

IF we were to follow St. Matthew implicitly in the order in which he has arranged the events of these first days of Holy Week, we might be inclined to suppose that the cleansing of the Temple, which took place at this time, happened on the same day with the Procession of Palms. The mistaken impression which St. Matthew's order might occasion, without any meaning on the part of the Evangelist, is at once corrected by the account of St. Mark, who tells us that the Day of Palms closed, as we have described it in the last chapter. We have given St. Mark's words about the doings of the Day of Palms. 'And He entered into Jerusalem, into the Temple, and having viewed all things round about, when now the eventide was come, He went out to Bethania with the Twelve.' The Greek speaks more precisely, implying that it was already late when He was in the Temple. The expression, having viewed all things round about, certainly excludes the supposition that He then purged the Temple. St. Mark adds that He returned to the Temple, as it seems, early in the morning. On his way to Jerusalem occurred the significant incident of the unfruitful fig-tree, the withering up of which, at the word of our Lord, was noticed by the Apostles as they

accompanied Him to Jerusalem on the following morning, that is, on the day after He had cursed it. The same day with the cursing of the fig-tree is also assigned to the casting out of the buyers and sellers from the Temple, as has been already said.

‘And in the morning, returning into the city, He was hungry, the next day, when they came out from Bethania, He was hungry. And when He had seen a fig-tree far off, having leaves, He came, if perhaps He might find anything on it. And when He was come to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the time for figs, and answering, He said to it, May no man hereafter eat fruit of thee any more for ever. May no fruit grow on thee henceforth forward for ever. And immediately the fig-tree withered away. And the disciples seeing it, wondered, saying, How is it presently withered away? And His disciples heard it.’

We have combined the two narratives of the Evangelists, and from them it seems clear that the fig-tree, perhaps, withered away immediately, but that the notice of its withering, as taken by the disciples, must be placed on the subsequent morning, when they again passed by the spot. There is, however, no improbability in the supposition that they observed it both when it withered up and at the time when they next passed it and spoke of it.

This miracle on the fig-tree is noted among the works of our Lord, as having been almost the only instance in which He exerted His miraculous power for destruction and not for blessing. The only other instance of the same kind that can be alleged is the permission which He granted to the legion of demons to enter into the herd of swine, which they immediately forced to plunge themselves in the lake.

But that was in truth a miracle of mercy, for it was the sequel to His casting the devils out of the possessed man. In the present case, it seems clear that the miracle was a parable as well as a miracle, and that the miracle was wrought for the sake of the parable it contained. We have already pointed out its connection with the short parable of the fig-tree, which is related for us by St. Luke. In the parable our Lord speaks of Himself as having come three years in succession to seek fruit on the Synagogue of Jerusalem, and as having granted it another year of respite before its final destruction on account of its unfruitfulness. Now the time of respite is at an end, and our Lord signifies the utter rejection of the Synagogue in the cursing of the fig-tree. This is made the more evident by the circumstances of the miracle. That our Lord may really have been hungry is likely enough, for He seldom allowed Himself much food, and spent the night in prayer, after the day had been spent in teaching, or as was the case with the Day of Palms, in activity which must have naturally exhausted Him. But that He should take occasion to let His hunger manifest itself externally, that He should approach the fig-tree at the season of the year when the figs could not be expected to be there, and then avenge, as it were, His disappointment by cursing the tree instead of making it fruitful before its time to satisfy His need, does not appear very probable. We must seek the meaning of this action in what was represented by it.

He wished then, we may suppose, to signify by some striking external sign, for which He had already prepared the minds of the disciples, that the time for the rejection of the rebellious Synagogue was at hand. Taken together with the parable,

this action meant to say that He had indeed come three years seeking fruit and finding none, that He had thought of cutting it down before, but had been induced by considerations of mercy to wait yet another year, that it might be let alone a little longer, that He might dig about and dung it. If it had borne fruit, it would have been well. But it had not borne fruit, and it was more than ever obstinate in its unfruitfulness. The time of mercy was past, and the time of chastisement was come. This could hardly have failed to present itself to the minds of the Apostles when they saw what had happened.

They had witnessed on the day before a great apparent triumph of our Lord, in His entrance into Jerusalem. If what had then passed had raised in them hopes of a change of tone in the Synagogue towards our Lord, this action of His in cursing the fig-tree would at once dispel those hopes. And if they were sorrowfully convinced that the priests would remain as obstinate as ever, this action of our Lord would prepare the disciples for His final breach with the priests, and for the doom of the whole nation. Thus, if this be the right interpretation of the miracle on the fig-tree, we may see at once how entirely in keeping with the occasion is the teaching which it involves. Our Lord signifies, as it seems, that the time is past during which He would expect fruit from the Synagogue. It was to teem, indeed, with a terrible fruitfulness, in taking the active part which belonged to it in the great sacrifice of His Passion, which was to be the Redemption of the world. Moreover, between the time at which the sentence was passed, and the time of its final execution in the destruction of Jerusalem and the whole Jewish

polity, the utter removal of the Mosaic rites, and the like, there was, in the mercy of God, an interval to take place, nearly the life of one generation, during which many of the children of the Synagogue were to be brought into the participation of the Gospel privileges. There is nothing more touching in history than the struggle of the Church of Jerusalem under the guidance of St. James and his companions. The annals of that Church are in the main lost to us, on account of the extreme severity of the persecution under which it had to learn. But it cannot be doubted that there were numberless saints and martyrs of the circumcision who might be legitimately reckoned among some of the brightest glories of the first century. So far, the curse of unfruitfulness did not fall at once. Many of the Jews who hung back before our Lord suffered, and even, perhaps, long after, were ultimately numbered among the pillars of the Church.

It is true that, as a system and an organization, the Jewish Synagogue remained always obstinately unfruitful and worse than unfruitful—for it was the great enemy of the Church. The traditions, which lasted into the Middle Ages, of the hatred of the Jews for Christianity, were founded upon historical fact, to some extent exaggerated. The delay in the execution of the full sentence, like the delay in the destruction of Jerusalem, or of the nation, is but an instance of the extreme compassionateness with which God always acts, even in executing vengeance. The Synagogue was doomed when our Lord uttered His malediction on the fig-tree under the walls of Jerusalem. The actual tree withered down to its roots at the word, and the fate of the community which it represented was sealed, though, 'for the

elect's sake,' as our Lord said afterwards, there were years still to pass for souls to be gathered in. And it has been thought by many Christian writers that it was not without meaning, that, at the end of His prophecy about the last days, our Lord has once again brought in the fruitfulness of the fig-tree. Of this we shall speak more at length presently. It seems as if the sign of the approaching end was, and is to be, this fruitfulness of the fig-tree, which the writers of whom we speak think to be a figure under which the conversion of the Jews of which St. Paul speaks in such glowing terms, is prophetically represented.¹

'And they came to Jerusalem, and when He was entered into the Temple, He began to cast out them that sold and bought in the Temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers and the chairs of them that sold doves. And He suffered not that any man should carry a vessel through the Temple. And He taught, saying to them, Is it not written, My house shall be called the house of prayer to all nations? But you have made it a den of thieves!' The circumstances which are thus described by St. Mark, with rather more fulness than St. Matthew and St. Luke, are very much the same as those of the former purging of the Temple by our Lord three years before. There is, however, a little more of severity on this later time, especially as on that occasion, when He 'made a scourge of small cords,' He did not overturn the chairs of the women, as they seem to have been, who sold the doves, for the lesser sacrifices, but simply told them to take these things away, and not make His Father's house a house of traffic. In other respects our Lord's

¹ St. Matt. xxiv. 32 ; St. Mark xiii. 28 ; St. Luke xxi. 29.

conduct was identical. Moreover, it seems as if He carried on the work of purgation which He had begun, for it is said of Him 'that He would not suffer any man to carry a vessel through the Temple,' which seems to imply that He remained there teaching, and when any one came by with a vessel in his hand, our Lord turned him back.

We seem here to have traces of a teaching in the Temple which occupied either a whole day, of which we have no detailed account, or part of one of the days of which the details are given us. It must be remembered that the ordinary teaching of the people by our Lord was usually of the same character, plain explanations of the law of God, moral instruction in virtue, a teaching which does not contain the controversy with His opponents which He entered on when He was challenged by them, when insidious questions were put to Him, and the like. The teaching of this kind which our Lord delivered in the Temple, seems to be, ordinarily, left by the Evangelists without special record, and it was probably much the same in substance with their own subsequent teaching in Jerusalem and elsewhere. This then must have been the staple of His teaching, even during these days of the Holy Week, while the parables which He delivered in answer to the Pharisees and others, which are so clearly prophetic or descriptive of their own conduct and the manner in which they would be dealt with in His own Kingdom, are more particularly related, as being something out of the common method of His teaching.

We must not therefore be too much surprised if we find that the incidents of a day like this, the first of His teaching in the Temple after His triumphal entry

into Jerusalem, are but shortly recorded. It may have been otherwise, for we have no clear definite statements to guide us to the number of days spent by our Lord in the Temple, and the occupation of each. It would seem as if our Lord's enemies had hardly the courage to attack Him in any way while the people crowded round Him in the Temple, and that it was not till the day after the cleansing of the Temple that they ventured to come upon Him with their questions, beginning with the formal demand for the authority with which He has done so much which especially galled them, in assuming a command over the Temple itself, which interfered a good deal with their personal interests. This may have been done then on the day subsequent to the cleansing itself, the greater part of which may have been employed by our Lord in peaceable teaching in the sacred precincts themselves. The day that followed was to be a day of fierce controversy, unlike the ordinary teaching of which we speak, but it begins quietly with the instructions given by our Lord to His disciples about prayer suggested by the incident of the cursing of the fig-tree.

‘And when they passed in the morning they saw the fig-tree dried up from its roots. And Peter remembering said to Him, Rabbi, behold the fig-tree which Thou didst curse is withered away. And Jesus answering said to them, Have the faith of God. Amen I say to you, that whosoever shall say to this mountain, Be thou removed and be cast into the sea, and shall not stagger in his heart, but believe that whatsoever he saith shall be done, it shall be done unto him. Therefore I say unto you, all things whatsoever you shall ask when you pray, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come unto you. And

when you shall stand to pray, forgive, if you have ought against any man, that your Father also Who is in Heaven may forgive you your sins. But if you will not forgive, neither will your Father Who is in Heaven forgive you your sins.'

That lesson which our Lord drew from the fig-tree as it stood withered before the eyes of the Apostles, was of a new character, as if He had wished not to dwell too long on the reprobation of His chosen people. The lesson which He drew immediately from the miracle was the power of prayer, as if He wished them rather to understand this from what they had seen, than the terrible doctrine of the final reprobation of the wicked who had paid no heed to grace. Perhaps they had been discoursing on the power of prayer on their way to the daily work in the Temple. At all events, He chose this subject for the instruction to be drawn from the miracle rather than any other, and perhaps He did not wish them to dwell longer than was necessary on the miserable fate of the Synagogue. It was more important that the disciples should receive some new encouragement in a matter which He was continually urging upon them, such as confidence in prayer. 'And Jesus answering said to them, Have the faith of God. Amen I say unto you, that whosoever shall say to this mountain, if you have faith and stagger not, not only this of the fig-tree shall you do, but also if you shall say to this mountain, Be thou removed and be cast into the sea, Take up and cast thyself into the sea, and shall not stagger in his heart, but believe that whatsoever he saith shall be done, it shall be done unto him. And all things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer believing, ye shall receive. Therefore I say unto you, all things whatsoever you shall ask

when you pray, believe that you shall receive them, and they shall come unto you.'

That great promise here made to prayer, and on which our Lord so much insists, requires some further explanation, although some has already been given in a former place. There are degrees of faith and confidence in prayer, and it is not to all these degrees that the words of the promise apply in their fulness. All prayer implies faith, for no one can approach God who does not believe in Him, with the faith which is necessary for salvation, which implies, besides the truth of His existence, the further truths of His Omnipotence, His goodness, His fatherly care over us, His listening to our prayers, and the like. And yet this faith may not be enough for the great promise with which we are here concerned. This faith will lead us to pray to God, but it must go beyond the truth of His general power, goodwill, and care for our welfare, to the further reliance on His goodwill to hear us, here and now. We may have no doubt, which would be sinful, as to the general truth that God hears prayer, and yet be unable to win from Him the granting of our particular petition. The faith which our Lord required ordinarily of those who were the subjects of His miracles, was something more particular and special, a confidence that the thing asked for not only could be but would be granted by Him. We constantly find Him leading on those who had at first an imperfect faith, to the more perfect faith which was required for the miraculous granting of the prayer. We see this in the case of the nobleman, whose son was healed by our Lord when at a distance. It is a stretch of belief which had not been instanced before that time, though we find it in the case of the

Centurion, whose servant our Lord afterwards healed. So it was with Martha about the resuscitation of Lazarus, and so it was in many other instances. Many things may be requisite for a confident prayer of this kind, and it is hardly possible that such a prayer can be made by those who instinctively feel that there is something in themselves which prevents their asking boldly, such as a want of perfect charity, or anything like negligence and carelessness, which puts them at a distance from God.

Thus St. John says in his first Epistle, "Dearly beloved, if our heart do not reprehend us, we have confidence towards God, and whatsoever we shall ask we shall receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight."² This feeling of peace of conscience, of having nothing in us that we are aware of as being a cause of separation between us and God, is essential to the confidence which is required in perfect prayer. And, on God's part, this is constantly accompanied, as we may believe, by a pious inspiration, which breathes into us a holy boldness. For He is truly the Author of our prayer, as well as the Creator to Whom our prayer is made. He first of all instigates us to ask according to His desire to grant us His favours, then He gives us the confidence in asking them, which is a key that as it were unlocks His Heart, and makes Him pour out His benefits abundantly in answer, which is the last part of the process, begun, and carried on, and ended and crowned by Him. According to our charity is the measure of our merit, and according to our confidence is the measure of our efficacy in impetration.

² 1 St. John iii. 21, 22.

We gather from the saints that they ask, perhaps, a few things, but with great seriousness and earnestness. St. Paul tells us of himself that he asked three times over that the 'sting of his flesh' might be taken away. It seems to have been a surprise to him that he had to ask so often without obtaining, until the answer to his prayer came, telling him that it was better for him to be tried by this plague, for 'My grace is sufficient for thee.'³ We see that St. Paul's prayer was made with extreme confidence, which is in itself of great merit before God.

Our Lord is speaking in the place before us of the great faith which is required for the working of miracles and prodigies, and we cannot doubt that this is ordinarily a privilege of souls which are very dear to Him on account of their great perfection, familiarity with Him in prayer, purity of conscience, and the like. When St. Paul speaks of having faith so that he can move mountains,⁴ he refers to these words of our Lord. The words that are added by our Lord—'All things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer believing, you shall receive. Therefore I say unto you, all things whatsoever you ask when you pray, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come unto you'—seem to enjoin on us, as a counsel which will help immensely to the efficacy of our prayers, the deliberate and attentive act by which we claim, for each particular prayer that we make, the efficacy which has been promised thereto, founded upon considerations of our Lord's power and love for us, and His desire for our good in that particular matter for which we have prayed. A habit of this kind cannot but add a great and serious effort to our prayers and a great power to them. They become

³ 2 Cor. xii. 8.⁴ 1 Cor. xiii. 2.

acts of faith, hope, confidence, submission to His Divine will, and immense thankfulness for the great privilege of prayer, the highest and noblest occupation in which our souls can be exercised, and above all, of supreme charity. And St. Mark tells us of yet another counsel given by our Lord at the same time, adding another necessary element to the efficacy of our prayer, which, indeed, cannot be efficacious without it.

‘And when you stand praying’—words taken from the Sermon on the Mount—‘forgive, if you have ought against any man, that your Father also Who is in Heaven may forgive you your sins. But if you will not forgive, neither will your Father Who is in Heaven forgive you your sins.’ It is to be supposed that our Lord is here speaking in particular of prayer which is made for forgiveness of sins, although the precept which He gives in this place holds true and good of all prayer, intercessory, impetratory, or of every other kind. For this is according to His own precept in the Sermon on the Mount, to leave our gift before the altar in order to go and be reconciled to our brother before we offer it. And of course, if the command can be more imperative in one case than in another, its obligation will be most weighty with regard to prayer in which we ask for the forgiveness of our own sins, for He has not taught us to ask for this except on the condition expressed in His own prayer. ‘Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us.’ He bids us insist, then, upon these two things when we ask anything of the kind, on the exercise of faith and of particular confidence as to the granting of the petition which we may make, and on the explicit and careful removal from our own souls of anything

like unforgivingness. These two things are essential, both as conditions of our own heart, and as conditions of God's mercy towards us. Our own heart can certainly not frame a prayer with that confidence which is necessary, if it feels a doubt as to God's readiness to grant what we ask. St. James says, 'Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, which is moved and carried about by the wind.'⁵ Nor can our heart prompt us to hope much from God for ourselves, while there is in them any consciousness of aversion to our brother. And He will not readily hear the prayer of a soul between whom and Himself there is the separation which must certainly be involved in the defect of confidence and in the defect of charity.

We seem to see a lesson of special importance in the manner in which our Blessed Lord turned the minds of His disciples, on the present occasion, away from the incident which had suggested the conversation, to the great subject of the efficacy of prayer, and the conditions on which it depends. We cannot be certain that they understood the full parabolic meaning of the withering of the fig-tree. If they in any way grasped that meaning, they may have been led into a train of thought in which there might have been some sort of rejoicing over the doom of the reprobate enemies of our Lord, who were represented by the withered stump before them, at all events some satisfaction in seeing His power exerted in some other direction than which was usual with Him, the direction of mercy and gentleness. Such thoughts might well occur to saints and apostles, as our Lord Himself rejoiced in the justice

⁵ St. James i. 6.

of God in hiding the good things of the kingdom from the wise and prudent, and revealing them to little ones. Yet good and holy as such lines of thought might be, He did not wish them to be entertained and dwelt on long. And if the Apostles understood but little of the meaning of the 'parable to action' which they had seen, and merely thought of it as an exertion of His power, He seems to have wished to turn them away from that also, in order to dwell rather on what was so practical and vital to themselves, as the might of prayer. The Apostles were sometimes guided by the Holy Ghost to show their power in judgment, as St. Peter with Ananias and Sapphira, or St. Paul with Elymas. But it was more important at that time that they should receive fresh and fresh instruction as to the power of Christian prayer, and for this purpose He gave them the two beautiful lessons which are conveyed in His words about the confidence and charity with which it must be made.

CHAPTER IV.

The Question as to Authority.

St. Matt. xxi. 23—32 ; St. Mark xi. 27—33 ; St. Luke xx. 1—8
Story of the Gospels, § 135.

WE suppose that, after the cleansing of the Temple, to whatever day that action of our Lord may be assigned, our Lord proceeded to instruct the people in His usual manner. That is, He began to instruct the people on ordinary moral subjects, without anything that might be called contentious or controversial, or anything like an attack on His enemies. However, the event which had lately occurred was not to pass away without some formal notice on the part of the Chief Priests. He had taken on Himself once before to purge the Temple of the buyers and sellers, who could not have plied their trade within its walls without the cognizance of the rulers, and they had on that occasion immediately interfered with a demand as to His Power. They had then asked for a sign.

St. John tells us, 'The Jews answered and said to Him, What sign does Thou show us, seeing Thou dost these things?' and our Lord answered them in the significant words which they did not understand at that time, and which they were soon exactly to fulfil in what they would do during the next few days. 'He answered and said to them, Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up.'¹

¹ St. John ii. 18, 19.

St. John tells us that He spoke of the Temple of His Body. Our Lord had repeated the answer on another occasion in Galilee, when asked for a sign, and when He had said that no sign should be given to that generation but the sign of the prophet Jonas. 'For as Jonas was in the whale's belly three days and three nights, so shall the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights.'² Now, however, our Lord's enemies did not think it prudent to ask for a sign. Or they may have remembered His former answer, and have been anxious that He should not repeat it now. For it was an inaccurate version of that former answer which was made the occasion of the charge which their false witnesses were to support at His trial a few days later.

The Evangelists continue, 'But when He was come into the Temple, when He was walking in the Temple, teaching the people and preaching the Gospel, there came to Him the Chief Priests and the Scribes and the ancients of the people, they met together and spoke to Him, saying, Tell us by what authority dost Thou these things, and who hath given Thee authority that Thou shouldst do these things, who is he that hath given Thee this authority?' The question, therefore, was put formally by those who were considered as the lawful rulers in the holy place, and it was put in the presence of the people who were assembled to listen to His teaching.

It can hardly be doubted that the question, asking about His doing these things, referred directly to what had been the last thing done by Him in the Temple, that is, the purging of the sacred place from the traffic which was there going on. As far as

² St. Matt. xii. 38-40.

we know, this is the first occasion on which these enemies of our Lord had confronted Him since His arrival in Jerusalem, and His presence in the Temple on the Day of Palms. Then they had noticed and remonstrated about the children crying Hosanna in the Temple, but it was only to ask Him, 'Hearest Thou what these say,' and there was no extraordinary assemblage or solemnity to give their interference an official character. If it was that they remembered His words three years before, and intended to make them, if they were now repeated, the ground of a charge, our Lord must have known it, and He did not give them the opportunity. He answered their question, only in a manner that would silence them, without alleging the authority on which He acted, and His answer, as well as their question, was public, and in the presence of the people.

'Jesus answering said to them, I will also ask you one word, one thing, and answer you Me, which if you shall tell Me, I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Answer Me. The baptism of John—whence was it? was it from Heaven, or from men? But they thought within themselves, saying, If we shall say, from Heaven, He will say to us, Why then did you not believe him? But if we say from men, we fear the multitude, for all held John as a prophet. The whole people will stone us, for they are persuaded that John was a prophet. For all men counted John that he was a prophet indeed. And they answered that they knew not whence it was. And answering Jesus, they said, We know not. And Jesus said to them, He also said to them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.'

This answer of our Blessed Lord must not be

considered as a mere skilful evasion of a question by means of which the persons who were thus baffled had intended to embarrass Him and lead Him to some avowal which they might use against Him. The works of God are all beautifully ordered, and when He addresses to His people a series of truths and revelations concerning Himself, the earlier links of the chain must be grasped before the later links, and if the first truths are not accepted, there will be a difficulty in receiving the last. The last link, so to say, in the chain of evidences and declarations, by means of which it was divinely ordered that men should recognize our Lord when He came, was the baptism and testimony of St. John. The people had accepted this baptism as a call from God to penance, and their hearts had thus been prepared to receive the teaching of St. John as to our Lord's Person, which had then been speedily and magnificently confirmed in other ways, especially the testimony of His Father when He was baptized, and the many miracles by which His mission had been authenticated.

Probably, of all the multitudes who had the opportunity of preparation given them by the baptism of John, few had neglected it without injury to their souls, and without, in particular, being unable to close with the divine counsel to which it was the introduction. This is what St. Luke speaks of when he says that 'all the people and the publicans justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John, but the Pharisees and Lawyers despised the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized by him.'³ And now, when the ultimate reprobation of these enemies of God was imminent, our Lord

³ St. Luke vii. 29, 30.

quietly and solemnly sends them back to that 'counsel of God' which they had despised. If the baptism of John was from Heaven, the testimony of John also was from Heaven, and if the testimony of John was once received by them, they would have no difficulty in receiving the acts and words of Him to Whom St. John bore witness, especially as they were authenticated by so many further testimonies more splendid and more evidently divine than his. There would then have been no need of a question about our Lord's authority, whether to purge the Temple or to teach anything that He might think well to teach as the Messenger of God.

Our Lord further explained His words by a parable which they listened to in silence. 'But what think you? A certain man had two sons, and coming to the first he said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. And he answering said, I will not. But afterwards, being moved with repentance, he went. And coming to the other, he said in like manner. And he answering said, I go, sir, and he went not. Which of the two did the father's will? They say to Him, The first. Jesus saith to them, Amen, I say to you, that the publicans and the harlots shall go into the Kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of justice, and you did not believe him. But the publicans and the harlots believed him. But you, seeing it, did not even afterwards repent, that you might believe him.' St. John's coming in the way of justice seems to mean that he was a preacher and exemplar of penitence, in which sense the word 'justice' is sometimes used in the New Testament, that is, in the sense of repentance and satisfaction.

The parable is thus explained by our Lord Himself,

and we have only to draw out the doctrine which His explanation contains. The application to the two classes, the Scribes and Pharisees, on the one hand, and the publicans and harlots on the other, is not meant to be exact in every particular. The priests were not called before the people, and the people afterwards, nor the reverse, but all at the same time. All were called, and called to repentance, which is the point on which our Lord insists.

The call to penance, which was at first resisted by the first son, and then, on repentance, listened to, represents the condition of the class to which the publicans and sinners generally belonged, whose life was openly such that they plainly needed penance and conversion. This was the class which was made ready to receive our Lord by its obedience to the call of penance made by St. John. The other son who is said to have promised obedience, and not to have fulfilled the promise, consisted of the priests and rulers on whom the call to penance fell dead. They professed a general obedience to the Divine Law, but they were not prepared to obey it when it invited them to a change of life. The working in the vineyard is a general description of what our Lord called elsewhere, 'working the work of God,'⁴ that is, believing on Him Whom He had sent, for which in this case penance and conversion of life were required.

Our Lord says that the people did penance, and they were fitted for faith. They had not obeyed God before, but now they obeyed Him by conversion. The priests declined the invitation. They appeared to themselves not to need penance, and in consequence they remained unconverted, and the result

⁴ St. John vi. 29.

was inability to believe even all the evidences which were accumulated before their eyes in favour of our Lord. Our Lord tells them, that when they saw the conversion of the people going on before their eyes, even then they did not repent that they might believe. He puts penitence, as preached, according to the 'counsel of God,' by St. John, as the necessary foundation of belief. Penitence produced humility, and humility enlightenment. Those who thought they did not need conversion, missed the light, and so were unable to believe.

It cannot be doubted that the priests to whom our Lord spoke were far better able to appreciate these evidences of His mission which addressed themselves to the intelligence, than the uninstructed people. They were versed in the Scriptures, and knew the prophecies of so many various kinds, personal and other, the light of which centred in our Lord. They could understand better than others the needs of the world, and the beauty of the provisions for its healing which were made by Him. They have their counterpart in the many clear and well-instructed minds of our time, which can see how well the Christian system is adapted to satisfy the intellectual and moral needs of our nature as it is in the world, and how inadequate and feeble are all other religious systems for that purpose. But they cannot believe. The first process in conversion is wanting—the humility which acknowledges the sinful heart, the life stained and degraded, which need cleansing and elevating, which need above all things a Physician and a Redeemer. So it is with many outside the Church, who are too acute to be blinded by the sophistries of heresy, the open self-contradictions of schism, but who find themselves in positions not

unlike that of these priests of the Temple, and who might forego the worldly comforts and emoluments which belong to such, but who cannot yet brook the humiliation, ever so sweetly tempered as it may be by mercy, of kneeling to one of their brother men in a Catholic confessional. So they argue and find fault and cavil about the most unimportant matters, they rake up the dead ashes of extinct controversies, and sift the dust of old exploded fables against the Church, while she stands before them in the full blaze of divine evidence, pointing her out as the only possible possessor of the notes registered for them in the Catholic Creeds, as clearly as our Lord was marked out as the Messenger of God by the miracles which the Jews could not gainsay. Such men lack the compunction of heart, the self-abasement from consciousness of sin and fear of judgment, which is the most powerful element in all conversion, and not in conversion alone, but throughout the whole Christian life, and especially in all that has to do with the ministering at the altar and preaching the holy word of God.

CHAPTER V.

The Parable of the Husbandmen.

St. Matt. xxi. 33—46 ; St. Mark xii. 1—12 ; St. Luke xx. 9—19 ;
Story of the Gospels, § 136.

THE Parable of the Vineyard and the Husbandmen, which follows on that of the two Sons, in the three Evangelists, seems to have been delivered by our Lord without any break between the two. St. Mark and St. Luke preface it by the words, 'He began to speak unto them in parables,' 'He began to speak to the people in parables,' but they probably do this because they have not mentioned the parable which we have just been considering, which is peculiar to St. Matthew. It seems that the Chief Priests and elders were still with Him, and that they are the persons to whom the parable was addressed, and who answer the question at the end, 'When therefore the Lord of the vineyard shall come, what shall He do to these husbandmen?' And again, it is said that they knew, that is, they came to understand that He spoke this parable unto them, that is, with reference to them, and that after it was finished, 'leaving Him, they went their way.' This parable, therefore, like that of the two Sons, was especially addressed to them, although the people as well as they heard it. In this it seems to be distinguished from the other which follows, that of the Wedding Supper of the King's Son.

'There was a man who was a householder, who

planted a vineyard, and made a hedge about it, and dug a place for the vine vat, a press, and built a tower and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a strange, a far, country, and he was abroad for a long time.' Unlike so many of the parables of our Lord, this is founded upon a well-known passage in the Old Testament, with which these Chief Priests must have been perfectly familiar. The repetition of the imagery must certainly have been designed by our Lord to impress on them more forcibly the doctrine which He was about to lay down. Isaias had said,¹ 'I will sing to my beloved the canticle of my cousin concerning his vineyard. My beloved had a vineyard on a hill in a fruitful place, and he fenced it in and picked the stones out of it, and planted it with the choicest vines, and built a tower in the midst thereof, and set up a wine-press therein, and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.' He goes on, as we shall see, to make it quite plain that the vineyard is a parabolic image for Juda and Jerusalem. The beginning of the parable must therefore have pointed to the application of the whole to themselves in the minds of the priests, and they must have been prepared for a strain of complaint and reproach, though far less severe than that which is contained in the actual parable. But the great point of all, that it was to apply directly to themselves, the rulers of the holy people, must have been plain to them at once.

Isaias goes on, 'And now, O ye inhabitants of Jerusalem and ye men of Juda, judge between Me and My vineyard. What is there that I ought to do more to My vineyard, and I have not done to it?

¹ Isaias v. i.

Was it that I looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it hath brought forth wild grapes? And now I will show you what I will do to My vineyard. I will take away the hedge thereof and it shall be wasted, I will break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down, and I will make it desolate, and it shall not be pruned, and it shall not be digged; but briars and thorns shall come up, and I will command the clouds to rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the man of Juda His pleasant plant, and I looked that he should do judgment, and behold, iniquity, and do justice, and behold a cry.' It is not necessary to endeavour here to explain all the particulars in the parable of Isaias. But it is clear that the lot of the vineyard is a prophetic representation of the manner in which God was to deal with the Jewish Church by the Babylonian Captivity, and it is not difficult to follow in general the chief outlines, the destruction of its fences and wall, desolation, want of cultivation and care, the consequent overgrowth of the thorns and briars, and last of all, the terrible chastisement, which is represented by the words that God will command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. With the history of this former chastisement before them, the Jewish priests must have been already prepared for the denunciation of very terrible woes indeed upon the vineyard in its coming desolation.

They might have prepared for much, but hardly for the exact words which follow. The prophecy of Isaias goes on to denounce a series of woes on the people of that time, but our Lord keeps to the image of the parable, making the new feature which He has introduced into it the most prominent of all. That new feature is the 'husbandmen' to whom the

vineyard was let out, 'And at the season, when the time of the fruits drew nigh, he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard. He sent other servants to the husbandmen that they might receive the fruit thereof: who having laid hands on him, beat him and sent him away empty. And again he sent another servant, and they wounded him in the head and used him reproachfully, they beat him also, and treating him reproachfully, sent him away empty. And again he sent the third, and they wounded him also and cast him out. And the husbandmen laying hands on his servants beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. And again he sent other servants more than the former, and they did to them in like manner. And again he sent another, and him they killed and many others, some of whom they beat and others they killed.'

We have here, then, the beginning of that part of this great parable which is our Lord's own. The desolation and barrenness which have fallen on the vineyard in the prophecy of Isaias, are changed into something more hateful and aggressive against the honour of God. We have the human agents to whom the care of the vineyard has been committed, and their treatment of their Lord and His messengers becomes the chief part of the picture. By the messengers must be understood all the prophets and just men of the elder dispensation, all of whom were in their turn persecuted by the people and their rulers. Our Lord was presently to reproach them with their own confession, that they were the children of those who slew the prophets, although that confession was accompanied by an attempt to dissociate themselves from the guilt of their forefathers. Jerusalem was

now to Him, 'Thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee!' And He bids them fill up the measure of their fathers. And the great speech of St. Stephen, in the Acts of the Apostles, is a continuation of the same strain.² St. Stephen begins with the persecution of Joseph and of Moses, the continual relapse of the people into apostacy, and ends by telling them, 'Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Ghost, as your fathers did, so do you also. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain those who foretold of the coming of the Just One, of Whom you have been now the betrayers and murderers, who have received the Law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it!'

The words of St. Stephen about the betrayal and murder of the Just One do not go beyond what is contained in the parable here given by our Lord. For after describing so carefully the various treatments which had been meted out to the messengers of God, He goes on to add a third part to the picture, 'Therefore, having yet one son most dear to him, he also sent him to them last of all, saying, They will reverence my son! What shall I do? I will send my beloved son, it may be, when they see him, they will reverence him. And in like manner last of all, he sent to them his son, saying, They will reverence my son! But the husbandmen, when they saw him, thought within themselves, saying, This is the heir, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours—come, let us kill him, and we shall have his inheritance. And laying hold on him, they killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard—they cast

² Acts v

him out of the vineyard, and killed him.' And then, without further explanation, He puts the fearful question, 'What therefore will the lord of the vineyard do unto them? When therefore the lord of the vineyard is come, what shall he do to these husbandmen?'

The three accounts of the Evangelists differ here only in this, that St. Matthew makes the answer to this question come from the priests themselves, and the other two put the words into our Lord's mouth. It is easy to suppose that the excitement of the moment was great, and that the priests took the answer to themselves, partly moved by great indignation against the supposed husbandmen, partly, perhaps, suspecting that He was drawing their own portrait, and wishing to anticipate the charge, by themselves declaring that the husbandmen were worthy of any amount of punishment. And then our Lord, with great gravity and solemnity, would take their own words from them, and apply them to themselves. There is something like the answer of the priests in the answer of David to Nathan, when he had put to him the parable about Bathsheba. 'David's anger being exceedingly kindled against that man, he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this is a child of death. He shall restore the ewe fourfold, because he did this thing, and had no pity. And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man!' Here the priests answer first, and our Lord then fixes the sentence on them. 'They say to Him, He will bring those men to an evil end, and will let out his vineyard to other husbandmen, that shall render him fruit in due season.' Our Lord adds, as it were ratifying their words, 'He will come and destroy those husbandmen, and will give the vine-

yard to others.' And then their consciences smote them, 'Which they hearing said to Him, God forbid!'

The application of the parable to their own case was almost too palpable. The variation between the Evangelists seems to bring out the scene more distinctly before our eyes. In both cases, the parable ends with a question, 'What therefore will the lord of the vineyard, when he shall come, do to those husbandmen?' In St. Matthew's account the Jews answer our Lord themselves. They say to Him, 'He will bring those evil men to an evil end, and will let out his vineyard to other husbandmen, that shall render him fruit in due season.' In the other two, the answer is in our Lord's own mouth, 'He will come, and will destroy those husbandmen, and will give the vineyard to others.' And then the Jews answer, 'Which they hearing, said to Him, God forbid.' The accounts are both correct, if we understand that our Lord spoke first, and the people echoed His words, or it may be, they gave the answer, and He repeated it in so solemn a manner, as to strike them with fear and make them cry out, 'God forbid!' For they were hanging upon His lips, and were so absorbed in the interest of what they heard as to be ready to anticipate the conclusion of the parable before He uttered it.

Then our Lord, as we may well suppose, thrust home the terrible lesson He had been teaching. The language passes beyond the parabolic veil in which His meaning had been wrapped up. 'Jesus saith to them, Have you never read in the Scriptures, the stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? By the Lord this has been done, and it is wonderful in our eyes. Therefore I

say to you, that the Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and shall be given to a nation yielding the fruits thereof'—in these last words, reverting to the imagery of the parable just delivered. And then He added the other terrible truth about the chastisement of their resistance to God. 'And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be bruised, shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder.'

The image which our Lord here uses has become famous in Sacred Scripture, both from this passage and from the manner in which it has been adopted by the Apostles after Him. The Scriptural origin of the image may be traced to *Isaias*.³ The prophet is speaking of the low condition into which Jerusalem had fallen and was yet to fall, and then adds a promise of restoration. 'Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lay a stone in the foundations of Sion, a tried stone, a corner stone, a precious stone, founded in the foundation. He that believeth, let him not hasten.' The Psalm from which our Lord quotes is the 117th, which is thought to have been used at the festival of joy at the dedication of the second Temple, after the Captivity, as related in the first Book of *Esdras*.⁴ Many words of this Psalm were still ringing in the ears of the people, as it is the source from which the shouts of Hosanna, and the words 'Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord,' had been taken by the people on the Day of Palms. This may have been one reason why our Lord used it now, and we cannot read it over without seeing how pointedly it prophesies of the great Sacrifice which now filled His mind. The first part of the Psalm is thanksgiving for the won-

³ *Isaias* xxviii. 16.

⁴ *1 Esdras* vi. 19—22.

derful deliverance of the people from their many and most powerful enemies, and the words certainly fit very well the occasion which has been mentioned. 'All nations compassed me about, and in the name of the Lord I have been revenged on them. Surrounding me, they compassed me about, and in the name of the Lord I have been revenged on them. They surrounded me like bees, and they burned like fire among thorns, and in the name of the Lord I was revenged on them. Being pushed, I was overturned that I might fall, but the Lord supported me. The Lord is my strength and my praise, and is become my salvation. The voice of rejoicing and of salvation is in the tabernacles of the just. The right hand of the Lord hath wrought strength, the right hand of the Lord hath exalted me, the right hand of the Lord hath wrought strength. I shall not die, but live, and shall declare the works of the Lord. The Lord chastising hath chastised me, but He hath not delivered me over to death. Open ye to me the gates of justice, I will go into them and give praise to the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord, the just shall enter into it. I will give glory to Thee because Thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation. The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner. This is the Lord's doing, and it is wonderful in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made, let us be glad and rejoice therein. O Lord, save me, O Lord, give good increase, Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord. We have blessed you out of the house of the Lord. The Lord is God, and He hath shone upon us. Appoint a solemn day, with shady boughs, even in the horns of the altar.'⁶

⁶ The more exact rendering is given by some as 'bind the *victim* with cords, up to the horns of the altar.'

It may be remarked that the passage about the stone which the builders rejected seems to be grounded on the passage of Isaias just quoted, in which the promise of the stone follows upon another in which the priests and prophets in charge of Jerusalem are described as having abandoned hope. 'The scornful men who rule over my people Israel.' God promises, notwithstanding, abundant salvation and prosperity. Thus the passage in the Psalm is a kind of commentary on the words of the prophet. Our Lord now uses it with immense force against His enemies, pressing on them the sacred words which apply so closely to the circumstances of His own reception. The 'builders' were those who answered to the rulers spoken of in Isaias, the 'scornful men' who were now in prominence over the people. They were now about to reject Him, but God was about to make Him Whom they rejected 'the head of the corner.' A few weeks later, after St. Peter had worked the first great apostolical miracle on the infirm man⁶ who lay at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, he could thus speak to these same rulers. 'Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Whom you crucified, Whom God hath raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was rejected by you the builders, which is become the head of the corner, neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved.'

The same Apostle expands the image in his first Epistle in a manner which shows the treasures of

⁶ Acts iii. 10-12.

doctrine it contains for Christian contemplatives. He speaks of Christians as stones, like our Lord, 'Unto Whom coming, as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen and made honourable by God, be you also as living stones built up, a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore it is said in the Scripture, Behold I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious. And he that shall believe on Him shall not be confounded. To you therefore that believe is honour, but to them that believe not, the stone which the builders rejected, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of scandal, to them that stumble at the word, neither do they believe, whereunto also they are set.'⁷

This text of St. Peter is interesting as showing the way in which the Apostles sometimes combine different parts of the same prophecy. St. Peter here refers to another passage of *Isaias*,⁸ where he says, 'Sanctify the Lord of hosts Himself, and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread, and He shall be a sanctification to you. But for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence to the two houses of Israel, for a snare and a ruin to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.' And in this use of the prophecy St. Paul, when he speaks of the causes of the reprobation of the Jews, follows St. Peter. 'They,' that is, the Jews, 'stumbled at the stumbling-stone, as it is written, Behold I lay in Sion a stumbling-stone, and a rock of scandal, and whosoever believeth in Him shall not be confounded,'⁹—where, it is evident, St. Paul blends the two parts of the prophecy together.

⁷ 1 St. Peter ii. 4—8.

⁸ *Isaias* viii. 13, 14.

⁹ Rom. ix. 33.

Our Lord adds a few words to the reference to prophecy. For in these parables, and indeed in all His dealings with the Chief Priests during this week, He is speaking judicially as well as prophetically, and is passing sentence on His enemies as well as reasoning with them. He takes up the image of the corner stone, and applies it to the various lots of those who oppose Him. But He first declares quite plainly and without any parable, the truth which He has been putting before them parabolically. 'Therefore, I say to you,' not simply as applying Scripture, but as declaring on His own authority, 'the Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and shall be given to a nation yielding the fruits thereof.' There is here no warning or threat that this will be done if they do not repent. He speaks as if the national sin were already accomplished, and the punishment which it involved already determined in the decrees of God.

'And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder.' It is easy to understand that a person stumbling over a large corner stone, even by mistake or carelessness, will fall and bruise himself. Even those who oppose our Lord and His Church unwittingly, and still more with an ignorance for which they are partly responsible, will injure themselves. And this we see in history and in common life. No one ever really prospers who attacks the Church, and if the temporal punishment is not inflicted in this life on the offender, it falls on his family, or it is reserved for himself in the next world. On the other hand, when the offence is more malicious and greater, and the opposition to God and the Church more open and deliberate, the

judgment of God falls on that person in the terrible doom of eternal damnation, which is expressed in the words, 'On whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder.' For such persons put themselves in open hostility and rebellion to God, Whose Providential action in the world, and for the salvation of mankind, is directly resisted and hindered by such sins as deliberate persecution of the Church, wilful schism, and heresy, and the like. The Apostle tells St. Titus not to argue much with such. 'A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition avoid, knowing that he that is such a one is subverted and sinneth, being condemned by his own judgment.'¹⁰

Thus did our Lord speak plainly and, as has been said, judicially to His enemies, the rulers of the holy people, in the Temple, and in the hearing of all. The time had come when He no longer cared to keep any measures with them. He had no wish now to delay the appointed consummation of their wickedness, for that wickedness was to bring about the redemption of the world. The Evangelists tell us that the Chief Priests quite understood Him. 'And when the Chief Priests and Pharisees had heard His parables, they knew that He spoke of them. And seeking to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitudes, because they held Him as a prophet. And leaving Him, they went their way.' That is, they would have seized Him then and there if it had been in their power. As it was not, and as He had openly braved their official authority, they had nothing to do but to withdraw.

¹⁰ Titus iii. 10, 11.

CHAPTER VI.

The Wedding of the King's Son.

St. Matt. xxii. 1-14; *Story of the Gospels*, § 137.

WE have seen that after the parables of which we have lately spoken had been delivered by our Lord, the Chief Priests had left Him in indignation. They had discerned plainly enough the intention with which those parables had been spoken. At the same time they could not help fearing for themselves, if they made any open attempt upon Him in the presence of the people. We may suppose then that He was left by them in comparative peace for the rest of the time which could be given to teaching on that day, and that He employed it, as was His wont, in instructing the people in the Temple. His teaching would thus fall back on to its usual lines, though it would to some extent be modified in character by the circumstances of the time and occasion on which He was teaching. It must be remembered, then, in studying the parable now before us, how momentous that time and that occasion were.

The parable which had just been delivered had conveyed to the priests with very little ambiguity indeed, the truth that the Jewish Synagogue was now rejected by God; that the Kingdom of God, that the system in which the true religion, the promises, the hopes of the human race, were all bound up, and through which the special means of grace

belonging to that religion had been opened to the faithful was now to be transferred to another people, who were to become the true children of Abraham and heirs of the blessings allotted to his race. And this solemn sentence had been pronounced in the Temple itself, by the King who had lately entered it in triumph in the name of the Lord, amid the Hosannas of the multitudes. It had been communicated to the Chief Priests, as the representatives of the holy nation, and had been understood by them almost in its full significance. Moreover, the solemnity which had taken place in the Temple had been an offering to God on the part of our Lord of Himself as the Victim for the Redemption of the world, in the sacrifice which was so speedily to be consummated on the Cross. Under such circumstances, the teaching of our Lord in the Temple assumed a new character. He had not simply to declare the annulling of the former and figurative system, but to lay down the principles and conditions of the new order of things which was to succeed in its fulfilment to the Old Law. That system was to be wide, and large, indulgent, full of mercy and grace, of life and spirit, it was not to be exclusive or severe, or hard in its requirements and obligations, its yoke was to be light, and its burthen sweet, and yet, with all these elements of condescension, it was a Kingdom, the system of a King, and, as the Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen had set forth the chastisement of those who had been disobedient under the former system, so there was to be in the new system a royal way of dealing with the presumptuous and disobedient.

The teaching of the parable which immediately follows in the first Evangelist seems exactly to corre-

spond to these conditions under which our Lord was now speaking. It is not one of those which were directly addressed to the Chief Priests, as distinct from the people. At the same time, it seems to refer to the Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen which had just been delivered, in a manner which shows that the particular lesson of the former was still before our Lord's mind as important to all. The people seem to have been present as well as the Chief Priests when the former was spoken. But the reference to the chastisement of the Wicked Husbandmen is here only introduced in a parenthetical manner. The more important part of the parable is probably the concluding section, for the sake of which it was perhaps spoken on this occasion, and this section requires the former portion as its foundation. It is also remarkable that the parable before us is in some degree a repetition of that of the Great Supper, which St. Luke places at an earlier stage of our Lord's teaching. That is, the substance is the same in both parables, though there are many important changes, as might be expected from the circumstances of the time. The Parable of the Great Supper had not, as far as we know, been delivered in public. It was spoken by our Lord when He was in the house of the friendly Pharisee, and therefore to a comparatively limited audience.¹ Above all, it was not spoken after our Lord had assumed, what we may call the character of judge. We shall point out the variations which our Lord introduced, now that He was speaking to the people collected in the Temple, after the beginning of the Week of His Passion, and then give a short commentary on this its second version, as it may be called.

¹ St. Luke xiv. 15—24; *Story of the Gospels*, § 112.

‘And Jesus answering, spoke again in parables to them, saying, The Kingdom of Heaven is likened to a King, who made a marriage for his son.’ In the former parable it is only, ‘A certain man made a great supper and invited many.’ The circumstances are therefore raised in dignity—the man becomes a king, and the feast is not merely a great supper, but a wedding feast for the son of the king. ‘And he sent his servants to call them that were invited to the marriage, and they would not come.’ This summoning of the guests who had been invited at the time of the feast itself, seems to belong to the customs of the Oriental nations. In this parable it is merely said that the guests would not come. In the former parable we are told that ‘they began at once to make excuse’—and the excuses are given in detail. ‘The first said, I have bought a farm, and must needs go out and see it, and another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to try them, and another said, I have married a wife.’ This last says, ‘Therefore I cannot come,’ and the others each begged to be excused. In the present parable, although it is a king who invites them on so special an occasion, there are no excuses made, but there is a simple refusal to come.

Another very significant difference is that in this later version of the same narrative, the King, notwithstanding his dignity, condescends to send again to pray the guests to come, whereas in the former it is never open to those who have once refused to regain their opportunity. ‘Again he sent other servants, saying, Tell them that were invited, Behold, my beeves and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready, come ye to the wedding. But they neglected, and went their ways, the one to

his farm, and another to his merchandise.' Nor is it simply a case of neglect. 'And the rest laid hands on his servants, and having contumeliously treated them, put them to death.' This then is something entirely new, as far as the comparison between the two parables is concerned, and it appears, as we have said, to be a reminiscence of what has been lately said by our Lord in the Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen. And it is followed by another entirely new feature, in keeping with it, for our Lord adds, 'But when the King had heard of it he was angry, and sending his armies he destroyed those murderers and burnt their city.' These details would have been out of place in the former parable, where the host, whose invitation had been slighted, is a simple individual without authority or power. It is only said there that the master of the house was told of these things, that is, of the excuses of the invited guests, and was angry at it—so much as to declare that none of those who were invited should taste of his supper. The vengeance in the later parable is quite in keeping with the kingly character of the host, in consequence of which the rudeness of the guests in the former parable becomes an insult to authority and a disloyalty in the parable now before us.

The sequel to the refusal of the guests is more fully drawn out in the parable in St. Luke than in that before us. There the master of the house says to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and the feeble and the blind and the lame. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the Lord said to the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges,

and compel them to come in that my house may be filled. But I say unto you, that none of those men that were invited shall taste of my supper. In the present parable, there is one sending out into the highways and no more. 'Then saith he to his servants, The marriage is ready, but they that were invited were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, call to the marriage. And his servants going forth into the ways, gathered together all that they found, both bad and good, and the marriage was filled with guests.'

We now come to the last portion of the parable before us, which is entirely new and has no counterpart in the former. 'And the king went in to see the guests, and he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment. And he said to him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment? But he was silent. Then the king said to the waiters, Bind his hands and feet and cast him into the exterior darkness—there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' 'For,' our Lord adds, 'many are called, but few are chosen.' This then is what we gather from a comparison between the two parables, and we have now to explain the several truths which may be found set forth in them.

We need make but little question that the banquet to which the guests are here invited is the feast on the Gospel blessings, which is set forth by God in the Church. This involves, for those who enjoy it lawfully and profitably, the further banquet on the ineffable blessings of the Heavenly Kingdom. But it is something present, which is to be accepted and entered upon here and now, as is evident, if from nothing else, from the exclusion of the unworthy

guest, and the declaration with which our Lord concludes His teaching, that the called are many, but the chosen or elect few. In the former parable our Lord had spoken to the guests at an entertainment to which He was Himself invited, and when one of those present had been apparently so moved by His gracious conversation that He could not refrain from exclaiming, 'Blessed are they that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God!' Here there was no such invitation to speak. But our Lord seems to have desired to teach the privileges of the Gospel banquet, and He does so in language which goes beyond what He had before used, both, as has been pointed out, in the matter of the magnificence of the occasion, for it is the wedding of the king's son of which He now speaks in which all the guests seem to have been provided, or to have provided themselves with fitting robes, and in the obligatory character of the invitation on those who had received it.

Thus, then, in the earlier parable there is no punishment beyond the exclusion from the banquet for those who were so foolish as to despise it, and when they did so it seems to have been with a certain air of liberty and equality between themselves and their inviter which is altogether wanting in the later parable. There would be something rude in saying to a king, 'I pray thee hold me excused,' on account of ordinary employments. Our Lord then adds this further line to the teaching which He had already delivered, by making it the command of a sovereign which is neglected or despised. This teaching implies the truth that the acceptance of the Gospel privileges is obligatory, although it is left within the power of the human will to turn away from them when they

are brought home to it, for we are responsible to our Maker and Judge for the choice which we make, although He does not now force us to make the choice that is right. For we are His creatures and belong to Him by an absolute dominion, which has no parallel in creation, and we have no right, though we have the power, being free, to disobey His commands, even if they were hard and unprofitable to ourselves. On the other hand, we see in the comparative magnificence of the banquet in this last parable some allusion to the truth that now, after the Day of Palms, on which the great Sacrifice of our Lord was practically and formally begun, He speaks of the wedding feast of the King's Son, and seems to invite our thoughts to dwell on all the riches and splendours of grace that are laid before us in the Church, all of them flowing from and being applications of the fruits of that Sacrifice.

We seem to see a further advance in the doctrine of this parable over that of the former, in the measure that is dealt out by the great justice of God to those who decline His invitation, and thus put themselves in the position of rebels against Him. It seems a strange thing that persons invited in the way here mentioned, and to so great an honour and blessing as the sharing in the wedding supper of the son of a king, should not only neglect the invitation and treat it with indifference, but should go on further to heaping insult and contumely on the messengers, and even still further, to the putting them to death. There is nothing of this kind in the former parable. There the neglectful guests allege the excuses that have been mentioned, and these are so framed by our Lord as to embrace the three great concupiscences, which are the springs in human nature of

everything that debases and degrades it, and turns away the mind, which is given to man to feed on the things of God, down to the lower pleasures and the interests and ambitions of this world.

In the second parable our Lord takes a feature from the Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen, and adds it to the picture as drawn before. The great work of Redemption has been begun, the time is come for the Passion of the Son of Man by which that Redemption is to be wrought. The message which invites mankind to share in the Gospel feast necessarily includes the acceptance of the Gospel revelation of the great mercies of God through Jesus Christ and Him Crucified. It involves the obligation of obedience to His Law and the following of His example, as well as the enjoyment of the privileges won by the Precious Blood. It involves, therefore, faith, submission, obedience, humility, mortification, penitence, a life above the world, a trampling on all that the world and the flesh hold dear. It is a message, therefore, which the natural man hates, which the world abhors and makes war upon, because its own fallacies and impostures are exposed thereby. So it is true, in the actual history of which this parable is the figure, that the messengers of the great King are not only disregarded and neglected, but insulted, ill-treated, or even slain. And now that our Lord has just spoken of the execution of the terrible sentence upon the Jewish nation for the guilt which it was to incur by His own murder, it is natural that He should no longer hold back this truth, even though, under other circumstances, it might have seemed out of place in this parable. He adds, therefore, both the circumstance of the

ill-treatment and murder of the messengers of God, deputed to bring to men the glad tidings of their salvation, and also the judgment that would fall on those who so dealt with them, in their temporal punishment even in this world. This seems to be the explanation of the King sending his armies, destroying the murderers, and burning up their cities.

The direct course of the parable is interrupted by our Lord for the purpose of introducing the outrages inflicted on the messengers of the King as well as the punishment of the offenders. It looks at first sight as if this might be merely a reminiscence of the Parable of the Husbandmen, inserted by our Lord for the sake of connecting the two in the minds of the hearers. But we can see that it is not merely a reminiscence. It is also a warning. And it will surely be wisdom not to pass over this lesson in considering this parable, not to forget to call to mind the truth that the good message of the Gospel, with all its graciousness and beauty, its fair promises of ineffable happiness and strength and recompence, must always find in us, as long as we are in the flesh, something which is stirred up by it to hostility and rebellion. For it is not only a message which nature does not care for, as something spiritual and too high for us, but also which speaks with authority and enjoins obedience, and implies mortification of all that is natural in submitting to it, and threatens, moreover, chastisement if we do not yield it obedience. To strive against the stream of the world while we are in it, and to fix our gaze on the things which are heavenly and eternal while we are beset by the things of sense, which pass away—this requires an effort and a continuance of exertion by

which our natural feebleness and inconsistency, our need of novelty and variety, are overtasked. And if our Lord seems to go out of His way to introduce this feature in His teaching, still it is in truth a necessary feature in any accurate picture of our present condition. Our Lord is preparing us beforehand for the feature of the 'man without a wedding garment.' There is therefore something more than a history of the past in the chastisement of these first offenders against the King, who refused his invitation.

Our Lord proceeds with the parable on the lines on which it had first been delivered. In His former teaching He had seemed to draw the distinction between the first and second sending of the servants to bring in guests, first into the streets and lanes, and then into the highways and hedges, and something has been said in the proper place as to the truths which may be illustrated by the distinction. There is in the first parable more stress laid on the desire of the lord that his house may be filled at any cost, save that of bringing in those who had been in the first instance invited. In the present parable there is less on this head. The first bidden guests are declared to be unworthy, and the servants are sent out to the highways to bring in all that they find. They gather together all, 'good and bad,' it is especially said, 'and the marriage is filled with guests.'

Here the great truth is set forth once again, that the law of substitution characterizes the Kingdom of God. That law is always being enforced, but it was never to be more signally enforced than in the first age of the Church, in the rejection of the Jews and the vocation of the Gentiles, for which our Lord seems at this time to have been anxious to prepare

the minds of the disciples. The truth had, indeed, been enunciated at the very beginning of the Gospel preaching, when St. John Baptist had warned the Jews against the danger of trusting their ancestors alone as sufficient to secure for them the benefits of the Kingdom, 'for God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.' But the more immediate point of doctrine which forms the principal feature in this parable, is the truth that not even admission to all the Gospel privileges is enough unless they are received and used with the required dispositions, and on the conditions laid down by God. This is set forth in the concluding section of the parable.

'And the King went in to see the guests. And he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment. And he said to him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment? But he was silent. Then the King said to the waiters, Bind his hands and feet, and cast him into the exterior darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' The action of the King going in to see or look upon the guests, seems to imply that the banquet was not possibly to begin without it, as if there was a certain examination to be made of the guests, or as if the King was to have the satisfaction of gazing upon them and welcoming them. This Greek word,² used for 'seeing,' often seems to be used in the sense of considering and enjoying the sight as something rare or at least pleasurable. There can be no doubt that in this context it signifies something of the same kind—the scrutinizing look under which all the guests in the Gospel Kingdom will have passed before they begin to enjoy it, as well as the

² θεωρεῖν.

delight which God will vouchsafe to take in the saints when they are at last assembled together for the happiness of Heaven. But there are many intimations in this passage that the parable describes, not the ultimate enjoyment of the Heavenly Feast so much as the banquet of good things, blessings, and graces almost without end, that are the inheritance of the children of the Church here below.

We are bid to remember that the enjoyment of the earthly privileges of the Church has its own certain conditions. The admittance into the Church is entrusted to men, who cannot know the heart, and may therefore be deceived, and even deceive themselves. And our Lord does not extend this parable so as to make it a picture of that judgment of God on each human soul, on all human souls collectively, which is to take place at the Particular or General Judgment. But there are certain conditions of admission to the Church which are not simply interior, and which may therefore be noticed by all, as this man was conspicuously different from the other guests. The Jews knew well enough who was and who was not formally admitted to the privileges of the Synagogue. There must be something corresponding to this in the new kingdom, unless—which is contrary to the truth—we consider it as an entirely interior and spiritual kingdom. But such a kingdom could not contain both ‘bad and good,’ as our Lord says, nor could any one be in it without a ‘wedding garment.’ We have therefore to consider what this necessary condition may be, without which, as our Lord here teaches us, we are to have no right to the privileges of His Kingdom.

The ‘wedding garment,’ which this one of the guests did not wear, must be the necessary qualifica-

tion to the banquet which, as has been said, represents the feast of good things 'which is set before us in the Church now, which good things are to ensure us hereafter the possession of God in Heaven. It is said that in Eastern countries it is the custom for the guests of a sovereign on solemn occasions to have precious robes given them to wear, and these robes may be presented to them as their own, or placed on them when they enter the presence of the King, to be worn as long as they are there. Those who are without them must therefore have refused to wear them, and be guilty in consequence of some disrespect. We should think it disrespectful, in a similar case, not to put on our best clothes for the entertainment given us by a prince, and if there were any uniform dress or decoration required by custom at such times, we should consider it an offence not to wear it. This seems to be the offence attributed to the presumptuous guest. He answers to men who think, because the doors of the Christian Church are opened so wide that all may come in, because the faithful servants of the King are, by His order, so eager to bring in all, whosoever they may be, that therefore the treasures which she offers so freely to all are to be enjoyed without loyal submission to her rules as a society and a kingdom. In the earthly feasts given by sovereigns, no one ever ventures to disregard the laws and rules by which such banquets are governed. Our Lord would have us, in using the blessings He has given us in the Church, remember that we are in the Presence of the King of kings, Who, indeed, gives Himself to us with ineffable love and tenderness, but Whose majesty must never be forgotten, nor Whose least prescription, or what seems such, be trifled with.

Thus our Lord Himself has said, 'He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved, and he that believeth not, shall be condemned,'³ and that, 'Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.'⁴ Here are conditions laid down by our Lord Himself for citizenship in the New Kingdom. St. Paul adds, explaining the precept of faith, 'This is the word of faith, which we preach. For if thou confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him up from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart, we believe unto justice, and with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation.'⁵ These are some of the laws of the Kingdom, and simple as they seem, they involve the obligation of complete obedience to all that the Church teaches us as necessary for belief and practice, an obedience which is treasonably and rebelliously violated by the slightest wilful dereliction against what may seem the least article of doctrine or the least precept of government.

It is not necessary to draw out in this place the whole doctrine in detail of what are the essential conditions for acquiring and maintaining membership in the Catholic Church. It is enough to say that there are such conditions, and that they seem to be here signified by our Lord under the image of the 'wedding garment.' There seems to be some apparent harshness in the exclusion of the guest before us, for it is imagined that his want of the wedding garment was no fault of his own, and the like. The supposition would probably be seen to be wrong by any one acquainted with the customs to which our Lord refers. But in

³ St. Mark xvi. 16.

⁴ St. John iii. 5.

⁵ Rom. xi. 9, 10.

the truth which is depicted by the parable, there is no question at all. The conditions on which the privileges of the Church are received, are open to all, and no one can forfeit these privileges except by presumptuous and contemptuous disobedience to her, such as is seen in the sin of heresy, which consists in departing from her faith, or in the sin of schism, which consists in rebellion against her law of unity and authority. In this matter, as in others, which are touched on by our Lord, especially in this last period of His teaching, He seems to have contented Himself with putting forth a great principle in a few words. He leaves to His children, this warning of the 'wedding garment.' Later in the New Testament we find this doctrine expanded like many others, by St. Paul, and the other Apostles, whose teaching about external offences against the Church is founded upon the truth here set forth.

We may trace, perhaps, the very language of this parable in the passage of St. Jude in which he speaks so strongly of the heresies of his own day, where he seems to refer to the agapæ, or Christian feasts, and to the persons whom he denounces as defiling those feasts by their presence. 'They are spots on your banquets, feasting together without fear,' as this presumptuous guest is said by our Lord to have presented himself at the marriage supper. As was natural for the purpose of his Epistle, St. Jude speaks principally of heretics and rebels against Church authority. Heresy in those days was usually accompanied by immorality. 'They defile the flesh, despise dominion, and blaspheme majesty. . . . These men blaspheme whatever things they have not, and what things soever they naturally have, like dumb beasts, in them they are corrupted.' He compares them to

Cain, Balaam, and the companions of Core. 'They are murmurers, full of complaints, walking according to their own desires, and their mouths speaking proud things.' The Apostles had already warned Christians against them. 'Be mindful, my dearly beloved, of the words which have been spoken before by the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who told you that in the last time men should come mocking, walking according to their own desires in ungodliness. These are they who separate themselves, sensual men, not having the Spirit.'⁶ He warns the faithful against them, and bids them carefully distinguish between them, for all are not so extremely bad. Some are to be treated with indulgence, in order that it may win them back. St. Jude's Epistle is largely founded on passages in the Second Epistle of St. Peter, who speaks of the same class of offenders, who are also denounced in the Epistles of St. John and St. Paul. There can be no doubt that these Apostles are speaking of external offenders against Church authority, and not of men whose sins were solely internal.

But there are so many beautiful interpretations of this parable, that, although the one just given seems on many grounds to be directly intended by our Lord, it may be well to add some considerations which may illustrate other meanings. If the Wedding Supper is considered as the Heavenly Banquet to which Christians hope to come after death, it is of course natural to ask what is meant by the wedding garment which, as we are here taught, is so indispensable. On this point there may be numberless opinions. It is certain, however, that he who enters, or thinks of entering Heaven with one sin on

⁶ St. Jude vv. 12, 16, 17-19.

his conscience unrepented, is thereby unfit for the presence of God. There are many things indeed which, as our faith teaches us, are essential qualifications for the enjoyment of that presence. 'Without faith no man can please God. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved.' But it would be contrary to Scripture and the Church to think that a man might be saved by faith if he is a breaker of the law in one single point, unless he has duly repented of the sin according to that law. Alas! in how many thousand ways may that law be violated, and so men make themselves guilty of violating the whole! The trials and temptations of men are various, and just as various are the ways in which they may present themselves at the Judgment Day without the wedding garment here spoken of—some for rejecting articles of the faith, some for breaking Unity, some for offences against the natural law, some for breaches of the Commandments of the Church. The malice of mortal sin may be found wherever there is a precept knowingly violated. There are sins of thought, sins of word, sins of deed, sins of omission, sins occasioned in others, or the sins of others participated in. Any one of these various classes may cause the stain on the soul which presents it to the eye of the Judge without its wedding garment. Nay, even where there is no mortal sin unrepented, there may be venial sins, or sins unexpiated, and the like, which must be atoned for in Purgatory, and till the soul is entirely freed from all these it cannot have on its wedding garment.

Again, it may fairly be supposed that the wedding garment would not always be the same, it might be of one kind and of one splendour in the case of the great courtiers or officials, and of another in that of

private guests. But in all it would mean something that was quite in keeping with the occasion and the majesty of the Sovereign. It would be in all cases something festive, joyous, gay, representing the ineffable happiness of a soul at peace with God, and on this account we might almost interpret it of Christian joyousness, which cannot co-exist in the soul which has any hidden sin, any discontent, any want of charity, and lack of filial love towards God, any gnawing anxiety, or gloom, or secret aversion from its circumstances or its surroundings. Such a happy, joyous disposition in life is truly a grace by itself, and the result of a combination of graces and virtues, and the presence in the soul of any conscious fault, unretracted, would kill it. Such is notably the temper of the innocent, happy, pure souls who give themselves to the service of God in those austere religious orders which do so much for His glory and the good of the Church by silent lives of prayer and good works, and the opposite tempers of gloom and constraint, so unlike the 'wedding garment,' is often a sign that there is some mischief working, as St. Teresa said she was more afraid of a melancholy nun than of a hundred devils.

Nor must we ever forget in our thoughts on this part of the parable how fond the writers of the New Testament are, and especially St. Paul, of the image of putting on our Lord, putting on the new man and putting off the old, and which is sometimes modified as when we are told to put on the whole armour, or panoply, of God, and which is carried out by St. Paul in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, in his famous passage about the building of God, the house not made with hands, eternal in Heaven, with which we are to be 'clothed upon' hereafter, 'that

that which is mortal may be swallowed up by life.'⁷ The Apostles do not quote the actual words of our Lord in their Epistles, but their minds are full of the things He has spoken, and we can trace in their language and their thoughts the influence of the sayings which they remembered. Perhaps the 'wedding garment' may have been a favourite thought of theirs, for it would represent in a simple image the whole array of the graces in which Christians must be apparelled, as well as the perfect character of their Master, Whom they were to strive to imitate so perfectly that their lives might represent Him, and reproduce Him, as it were, before the eyes of those whom they were to teach.

The virtues that form the character of our Lord are so much linked one with the other, that it is not easy to imagine that one can exist perfectly in a soul without at least the rudiments and elements of others. And any one great and obstinate fault in the soul, consciously entertained and clung to, is enough to impair other virtues besides that one to which it is directly contrary. Still it is true that different men, from their character, their antecedents, and the circumstances and the position in which they find themselves, find it less easy to practice one virtue than another, and in this way there may come to be grave faults against one virtue, while at the same time the soul may be even conspicuous for some others. Sensuality is essentially cruel, yet sensual men are often capable of acts of kindness and generosity. Angry men may be mortified in various ways, and temperate men may be selfish in their demeanour to others. The one virtue which is called the 'bond of perfection' by St. Paul, which

⁷ 2 Cor. v.

seems to keep all the other virtues together, and to be inconsistent with any great fault, is charity. But by this must be meant the supernatural charity, the love of God and of man for His sake, not mere humanity, kindness, generosity, sympathy for suffering, and the like. It must be the charity of which St. Augustine speaks when he says, 'No man can have the charity of God, who does not love the unity of the Church,' for as the same Saint says elsewhere, 'Men can have everything else outside the pale of unity, but they cannot have salvation.' This is often the test which distinguishes false virtue from true. Some men appear to have every kind of grace, till a sour cloud almost of malignity comes over them, when they are reminded of the duty of unity, and the sin of schism. Certainly, there are thousands of schismatics who think themselves members of the one Church, the living, actual existence is as much an article of the Christian Creed as is the unity of God or the Divinity of our Lord, and there can be nothing sour or malignant about such souls while they remain in their ignorance. But when anything touches a half-hidden fault of which the soul is not unconscious, the angry discomfort which it feels is meant by the mercy of God to arouse it to a sense of its position, to make it look around, and nerve itself up to the sacrifice which charity may entail on it, and in many such souls the words of the Apostle come true, 'If in anything ye be otherwise minded, this also will God reveal unto you.'⁸

We may now turn from the consideration of the various ways in which this expression of our Lord about the wedding garment may be understood to that of the gracious though severe manner in which

⁸ Philipp. iii. 15.

the King is said to have dealt with his unworthy guest. 'And the King went in to see the guests, and he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment.' The man was a 'spot on the feast,' as St. Jude speaks, conspicuous among the happy company by something incongruous and unseemly, as one who might go among ourselves into a wedding feast in robes of deepest mourning, or enter a great Court ceremonial in the clothes he may wear while ploughing in the fields or sweeping a chimney. This may be one of the reasons why our Lord speaks only of one, without meaning us to understand that there will be but one or few unworthy among those who are called to the banquet and obey the invitation. The doctrine which our Lord intends to convey is sufficiently and even more pointedly taught by the one instance, and, as some of the commentators tell us, this manner of setting forth the truth brings it home most closely to each soul, for it is seen that men are not called and admitted and tested in a multitude, but each single soul by itself.

Our Lord speaks as if the King used no sharp rebuke to the offender. 'Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?' The poor man had his opportunity given to him of making his excuse and explanation—if there were any to be made. But he is 'judged out of his own mouth,' for he has no reply to make to the question. The great truth which lies behind this is that there will be no question at all when the judgment of God is to be given. The light of the next world reveals all secrets, exposes all subterfuges and evasions, pulverizes all pretences, dissipates all clouds, unravels all webs. There is in the next world hatred of God as well as love, there is aversion from

good as well as aversion from evil, misery as well as happiness, despair as well as security. But there is no delusion, no single wicked soul among all God's enemies who has not seen that he has wilfully rejected his own happiness, and that the measure which God metes out to him is somewhat less than he deserves. A soul in the condition which is here represented to us parts with all its self-delusions when it passes through death. The false theories about the Church, and about the obligation of faith, and the conditions of salvation, and the rights of conscience, and the like, which seemed full of a miserable comfort, have all vanished as 'a dream when one awaketh' there. And so this soul might have said to itself a hundred things to excuse the fault, whatever it may have been, which is represented by the want of the wedding garment, but when it is there to place them before God, they are already gone.

All is over now. 'But he was silent.' The majesty of the King may have been great, and the show of power and pomp in his attendants may have been impressive, and the presence of the multitude of guests among whom this man was the one exception found, may have been overpowering. But what circumstances of this kind can be compared to the truth of the parable, when God the Judge of all in His Majesty is the questioner, and the whole world of angels and men form the assembly before whom the poor sinner stands? 'Then the King said to the waiters, Bind his hands and his feet, and cast him into the exterior darkness.' The punishment implies that the time is past when the sinner can help himself. He is bound hand and foot. He has no longer the power of moving or working, because the time

of grace is past when this rejection takes place, and no works done without grace are of any value spiritually. And he is cast into the darkness which reigns everywhere outside the kingdom of light, which is lit up by the presence of God, and of which our Lord is the light. The twofold punishment which our Lord adds may be considered either as spoken by Him as a commentary on the parable or as belonging to the parable itself. The two may be used to express mourning, remorse, horror at the state in which men will find themselves, and above all despair and self-reproach. There is no express word about physical torments, for those belong to another part of the sentence. They correspond exactly to the evil works of which men have been guilty, not precisely to their sins of omission and neglect of God's blessed offers, and misuse or contempt of grace.

The clause added at the end, 'For many are called, but few chosen,' seems to be meant to teach us that the danger of forfeiting God's blessings lasts up to the very closing of the doors of the heavenly banquet. This guest is represented as one among many, one lost among many saved. This at least might be concluded from the language of the parable. We have already explained why, as it may be thought, only one is spoken of. But he relied upon his having been called, and had not taken the pains to make himself fit to be chosen. He had not understood the responsibilities and essential obligations of his calling. It was but just, therefore, that the sentence of exclusion should fall upon him, and our Lord means us to take to heart the lesson of his case, and to tell us also that there will be many indeed, at the last day, who will have the same sentence as he.

CHAPTER VII.

The Question of Tribute.

St. Matt. xxii. 15—22 ; St. Mark xii. 13—17 ; St. Luke xx. 20—26 ;
Story of the Gospels, § 138.

THE three first Evangelists tell us that after the parables in which our Lord had spoken so openly against His enemies, the Chief Priests and Pharisees, the latter withdrew from openly molesting Him in His teaching, as they clearly discerned that His purpose was to expose and attack them. They did not dare, especially as the time of the great feast was drawing on, to risk open violence against Him. He was safe whenever the people were present, who at all events held Him as a prophet. The Chief Priests had not at all abandoned their intention of putting Him to death, but they were afraid to execute it in the face of the multitude. There was one power in Jerusalem greater than their own, and this was of course the power of the Roman Governor. Our Lord's enemies, therefore, hit upon a plan which would, as they hoped, give them an opportunity of bringing Him into collision with this power. Ever since the annexation of Judæa to the province of Syria at the time of the deposition of Archelaus, the question of the lawfulness of paying tribute to the foreign rulers of the country had become more burning. Even under Herod and his son, who were nothing more in truth than the delegates of Rome,

it must have been in the minds of zealots among the Jews that they were a free and holy nation, and ought not to pay tribute to any but a sovereign of their own nation, and that Herod could only be called such in a very lax sense indeed.

But when, in course of time, the Herodian kingdom came formally to an end by the dethronement of Archelaus, and the appointment of a Roman Procurator, the subjugation of Judæa became still more undeniable, and no pretext was left for considering them subject to a king of their own. We hear of the insurrection of Judas of Galilee about that time. That insurrection was quenched in blood, and it must have been evident to sensible men that the nation was not on the whole inconsiderately governed by the Romans, and that a state of things was in possession which implied a tacit acquiescence in their domination. Still, there was the theoretical question, which seems to have been agitated from time to time in the Pharisaical schools, and probably there were always some to maintain the stricter view, by which it was considered even unlawful to acknowledge the supremacy of Cæsar by paying him taxes. This question, then, the Pharisees determined to put to our Lord. They hoped that He would be unable to answer it either way without danger to Himself. An answer against the lawfulness of paying tribute to the Romans would bring Him under the notice of the Governor as a supporter of insurrection. An answer in favour of the practice might alienate from Him the favour of the people, ever jealous of anything that seemed to touch their national rights and their notions of independence.

All the three Evangelists tell us of this plot. 'Being upon the watch, they sent spies, who should

feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of Him in His words, that they might deliver Him up to the authority and power of the Governor.' This is St. Luke's account. The other two mention the particular persons who entered into this plan. 'Then the Pharisees going consulted among themselves how to ensnare Him in His speech, and they sent unto Him their disciples with the Herodians.' That is, the religious party, the men who were sticklers for the strict observance of the Law, and who were consequently opposed by the laxer sort of men, ready to go all lengths in concession to their pagan masters, leagued together with these last on the subject of a question which was constantly argued between them, as if it was to be settled by reference to our Lord Whom they hoped thus to endanger either in His life or in His popularity. They came to Him with words full of flattery and adulation. 'And they asked Him, saying, Master, we know that Thou art a true speaker, that Thou speakest and teachest rightly, and carest not for any man, for Thou regardest not the person of man, but teachest the way of God in truth. Tell us, therefore, what Thou dost think, is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not? or shall we not give it?'

The Evangelists seem to have been careful to preserve the very words in which these insidious questioners had the snare which they were laying. They were clever men of the world, in their own conceits, like the orator Tertullus in the Acts, who began his charge against St. Paul before Felix with complementary sentences of the same sort. They thought, perhaps, that they would easily outwit the simple, meek, truthful preacher from Galilee, little deeming that in Him dwelt all the wisdom and the majesty

of the Godhead, and that they were trying to deceive One Who read the thoughts of their hearts before they rose to their lips,—One Who knew with what intention of malice they asked the question, how false were all their compliments about His truthfulness and disregard of human respect, how false, too, the desire which they alleged of hearing from Him the way of God in truth.

‘But Jesus knowing their wickedness, their villainess, considering their guile, said to them, Why tempt you Me, ye hypocrites? Show Me the coin of the tribute, show me a penny that I may see it. And they brought it to Him. They offered Him a penny. And Jesus saith to them, Whose image and superscription is this? They answering Him, said to Him, Cæsar’s. And Jesus answering said to them, Render therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, and to God the things that are God’s. And they marvelled at Him. And they could not reprehend His word before the people, and wondering at His answer, they held their peace.’ This answer of our Lord, which solved the question to the confusion of the questioners, contains the whole general doctrine which was afterwards drawn out by St. Paul in the Epistle to the Romans, and in that to St. Titus.¹ It was not the object of our Lord, as it seems, to draw out the doctrine in full, in this place, for the question was not put honestly, but only in order to entrap Him. The Romans had been practically the rulers of Judæa since the troubles which ended the reign of the Asmonæan dynasty. It might be an abstract question whether they had rightfully acquired their sovereignty, but they had at least been long in undisputed possession, nor was

¹ Romans xiii. 1—7; Titus iii. 1.

there the slightest practical opposition to their rule. But our Lord does not go into the question of title at all. He takes the plain obvious fact of the political condition of Judæa as a subject province to Rome, and implies that that is enough for the obligation of conscience. The coinage of Rome was current in Judæa, as the coinage of the acknowledged sovereign. The fact implied that the Jews lived under the protection of the Roman arms, and, as far as they were imposed on them, of the Roman laws. The Romans kept the peace for them, administered the laws, or allowed them their own laws as far as they saw fit. They were the ministers of God, as St. Paul says, serving unto this purpose. They protected life and property, they secured the citizens their social rights, and chastised outrages and violations of the law. In return for all this, they exacted tribute. Those who profited by the peace which they secured, the protection against lawlessness, the administration of justice, the security of the family and the home, which were the results of their dominion, had duties in return to discharge towards them. Thus our Lord says, 'Render,' give back 'to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's.' The time came in the history of the Church when Cæsar asked more than belonged to him, and interfered with the rights of God. Christians could not give in to such demands, they suffered tortures and death in consequence, but they did not rebel. They left their cause to God, Who is the Supreme Author and Ruler of society, and in Whose hands it lies to remove kings and emperors, kingdoms and empires.

Our Lord knew how momentous for the welfare of society and the Church, which requires nothing but

peace to carry on her beneficent work in the world, were to be the questions which are involved in the duty to the civil ruler, who receives his power from God. This was not an occasion on which it would have been suitable for Him to lay down the whole details of the doctrine, but He summed it up in the epigrammatic form with which we are so familiar, which contains in itself the elements of the whole truth. He spoke once again, in the course of His Passion, a few words on the same subject, in vindication of the Divine origin of human government, the responsibilities of those in whose hands it rested, and the consequent iniquity of those who divert it to an unjust use. 'Thou shouldest not have any power against Me,' He said to Pilate, who was boasting of his power to crucify Him and to release Him, 'unless it were given to thee from above, therefore, he that delivered Me to thee hath the greater sin,'² his sin of injustice in itself is enhanced by his using for his malicious purpose a power which came from God. It is God Who has conferred on men the right by which they govern others, and it is He, therefore, Whose power is abused when a conscious wrong of oppression, or the like, is committed.

Here, as far as we know, our Lord left the matter of the rights of the civil governor, and His words became the text by which the Apostles were guided in their teaching. St. Paul, having laid down the duty of living at peace with all men, as far as is possible, adds, 'Let every soul be subject to higher powers,' using the same word which our Lord used to Pilate, meaning 'authority.' 'For there is no power but from God, and those that are, are ordained of God. Therefore, he that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordi-

² St. John xix. 11.

dance of God, and they that resist, purchase to themselves damnation. For princes are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is God's minister to thee, for good. But if thou do that which is evil, fear, for he beareth not the sword in vain. For he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil. Therefore, be subject of necessity, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For therefore also you pay tribute, for they are the ministers of God, serving unto this purpose.'³

In this famous passage St. Paul repeats three times over that civil authorities are the ministers of God. No doubt those for whom he wrote had many complaints against the rulers under whom they lived. He was writing to a Church composed, almost equally, perhaps, of Jewish and Italian Christians, and yet he makes no mention of the modern principle of nationalities. And our Lord, when He was laying down the principle before us, knew well enough how many thousands of the children of the Church, and others outside the Church, in every generation, were to be ground down under injustice and tyranny, for which in the course of His Providence, He meant ample redress to be exacted. The history of the world is the history of the succession of

Empires, on their way
To ruin ; one by one,
They tower, and they are gone,

each 'giant form' in the series, as it were, eating up its predecessor for unfaithfulness in its Providential

³ Rom. xiii. 1-6.

trust and for cruelty to its subjects. It is the same with royal houses and dynasties, the chastisement of whose misdeeds against the Church and mankind falls often, as we see, on innocent generations, who have to expiate the sins of their ancestors. God does not leave any evil of this kind unavenged, even here below. He brings about redress and chastisement in due time, and by instruments of His own choosing. In our own generation the world is full of the fragments of dissolved empires and the heirs of dethroned dynasties and houses that were once royal. 'Vengeance to me, I will repay, said the Lord,' and the remedy is far safer and more full of mercies when it is left to Him, Who never fails in His promise, 'I will repay.' But the times and seasons, the instruments and means, of this repayment are in His hands, and His Providence works out His Will in these matters with infinite justice and mercy, with the highest wisdom and the tenderest consideration for the good of all.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Question of the Sadducees.

St. Matt. xxii. 25—33 ; St. Mark xii. 18—27 ; St. Luke xx. 27—40 ;
Story of the Gospels, § 139.

THE attitude of our Lord seems to have provoked or encouraged the various classes among His enemies to ply Him with questions which it was their habit to discuss, and which seemed to them difficult to answer, except in a manner in accordance with their own favourite doctrines. The Pharisees, for the moment, kept aloof from any formal persecution of this kind, having contented themselves with the insidious attempt to entangle our Lord in His speech, of which we have lately heard, in which they do not appear to have made themselves prominent. The ruling party among the Chief Priests was, as we know, that of the Sadducees, a sect smaller in number and less in honour among the people than its rivals, but which was adroit in securing for itself the places of authority, almost habitually disposed of for money by the Roman governors, and which, by the laxity and worldliness of its tenets, had a considerable hold on the great people of the day. Indeed their doctrines do not seem to have been far removed from heathenism, except that they had no Olympus full of gods to worship. But they were a party of influence among the Jews, they pared down the Law which they were obliged to observe to the narrowest

extent, and formed a comfortable kind of religion of their own not far removed from simple materialism. Acknowledging only the Pentateuch as Scripture, they saw in it little which supported, to their gross minds, many of those vital truths which were believed by the mass of the nation. Among those which they very naturally rejected, as inconvenient to their conscience, the resurrection of the dead and the consequent retribution of men in the next world for their deeds good or evil in this, were conspicuous.

These sectaries had a favourite objection against that doctrine, in which they especially delighted on account of its apparent cleverness, and which, perhaps, had puzzled some of their opponents among the Pharisees, before it was proposed by them to our Lord. It was based on that prescription of the Law of Moses by which, in order that the inheritances of the several families in a tribe might be preserved, it was provided that, if a brother died without issue, his wife should marry the next of his brothers or the next of kin, and the first son born to her should be considered as taking her deceased husband's place in the tribe.¹ Perhaps the marriage of widows was not so common among the Jews, for there would have been no reason why the objection of these Sadducees should not have been urged about any case in which a woman had had more than one husband. But the Sadducees chose to put their objection in this way, in order to show that there was a direct commandment in the Law, which seemed inconsistent with what they supposed to be involved in the doctrine of the resurrection to which they objected. They put the case more strongly than could ever have been likely in real life, for the sake of argument, just as Pro-

¹ Deut. xxv. 5.

testants, who find in some canonists questions as to whether a boy can be a Pope, urge the matter as if this was a thing that might be perpetually happening. They supposed seven brothers to have become the husbands of the same woman in succession, according to the legal provision of the Levirate, and then asked triumphantly, whose wife she was to be in the resurrection?

‘And there came unto Him some of the Sadducees, who deny that there is any resurrection, and they asked Him saying, Master, Moses wrote unto us, if any man’s brother die, having a wife, and he leave no children, that his brother shall take her to wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. There were therefore seven brethren, and the first took a wife, and died without children, and the next took her to wife, and he also died childless. And the third took her, and in like manner all the seven, and they left no children and died. Last of all the woman died also. In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife of them shall she be? For all the seven had her to wife. And Jesus answering said to them, You err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. Do not ye therefore err, because you know not the Scriptures nor the power of God? The children of this world marry and are given in marriage, but they that shall be accounted worthy of that world and of the resurrection from the dead, shall neither be married nor take wives. For in the resurrection they shall neither marry nor be married, but shall be as the Angels of God in Heaven. Neither can they die any more, for they are equal to the Angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.’ This is the first part of our Lord’s answer. It corresponds to the first objection which He had

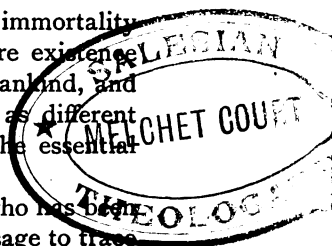
made to the doctrines of the Sadducees, when He said that they did not know the Scriptures, neither the power of God. They did not understand what God had said, nor what God could do. If they had understood this, they might not indeed have believed the resurrection, unless they had understood that it had been revealed; but they would have seen that there was nothing in it impossible or unlikely. It was a certain truth that all men were to die. This death consisted in the separation between soul and body, and was brought into the world as a punishment of the sin of Adam. If that sin had not taken place, man was at least capable of immortality, and the separation of the soul from the body was not a natural necessity, but a penal infliction, from which, as all nature shows, we shrink back with the greatest instinctive repugnance. We find much that relates to these questions in a famous passage of the Book of Wisdom.

‘God made not death, neither hath He pleasure in the destruction of the living. For He created all things that they might be, and He hath made the nations of the earth for health, and there is no poison of destruction to them, nor kingdom of Hell upon the earth. For justice is perpetual and immortal. But the wicked with works and words have called it to them, and esteeming it a friend have fallen away, and have made a covenant with it, because they are worthy to be of the part thereof.’² It implies a low idea of the power of God in creating man to suppose that He made him both in body and soul the mere creature of a day, although man may not have had in himself the principle of indestructible existence as regards the body. But the soul of man is a spiritual

² Wisdom i. 13—16.

existence, and therefore naturally imperishable. Moreover, the soul is so linked with the body, so closely united to it, so dependent upon it as the organ of its activity in every sphere of its life, that it seems more reasonable to argue that because the soul must continue after death, therefore the death of the body must issue in a new rising, than that because the body dies the soul must cease to exist. And it is little for the Creator of soul and body out of nothing, to restore to life what by death has been destroyed of the composite existence of man. These and other reasonings on the question of a resurrection may be used, as illustrating what our Lord here says about the power of God. Probably the lower the human race sank in its process of moral degradation after the Flood, the less strong did the old traditions of a future revival of the bodies of men become. As the soul came more and more to be regarded as having none but a material existence, the falsehoods concerning the hopelessness of a future life gained ground. As the Wise Man says, men 'esteemed death as a friend, and made a covenant with it,' in their hearts. But the universal belief of the human race from the beginning was in the other direction. Of course it is not meant that it was as easy to retain the belief in the resurrection of the body to new life, as the belief in the immortality of the soul. But the belief in a future existence seems to be a universal tradition of mankind, and few probably thought of that existence as different from the present state in this life in the essential matter of the union of soul and body.

The author of the Book of Wisdom, who has been already quoted, goes on in the same passage to trace out at length the progress of error in this matter,



helped on by the passions of men and their consequent instinctive desire to escape from the doctrine of future retribution. 'They said, reasoning within themselves, but not right, the time of our life is short and tedious, and in the end of a man there is no remedy, and no man hath been known to have returned from Hell; for we are born of nothing and after this we shall be as if we had not been, for the breath in our nostrils is smoke, and speech a spark to move our heart, which being put out, our body shall be ashes, and our spirit shall be poured abroad in soft air, and shall pass away as the trace of a cloud, and shall be dispersed as a mist, which is driven away by the beams of the sun, and overpowered by the heat thereof. And our name in time shall be forgotten, and no man shall have any remembrance of our works. For our time is as the passing of a shadow, and there is no going back of our end, for it is fast sealed, and no man returneth.' And then he draws out how all the excesses of vice are the results of such a belief. 'Come, therefore, and let us enjoy the good things that are present, and let us speedily use the creatures as in youth. Let us fill ourselves with costly wine, and ointments, and let not the flower of the time pass by us, let us crown ourselves with roses, before they are withered, and let no meadow escape our riot. Let none of us go without his part in luxury, let us everywhere leave tokens of our joy, for this is our portion, and this is our lot.'

And then further he goes on to point out how cruelty and oppression and hatred of the good, who rebuke the imposture of which men are trying to persuade themselves that it is true, follow inevitably upon the imposture itself. 'Let us oppress the poor

just man, and not spare the widow, not honour the ancient grey hairs of the aged. But let our strength be the law of justice, for that which is feeble is found to be nothing worth. Let us therefore lie in wait for the just, because he is not for our turn, and he is contrary to our doings, and upbraideth us with transgressions of the Law and divulgeth against us the sins of our way of life. He boasteth that he hath the knowledge of God, and calleth himself the Son of God! He is become a censurer of our thoughts. He is grievous unto us even to behold, for his life is not like that of other men, and his ways are very different. We are esteemed by him as triflers, and he abstaineth from our ways as from filthiness, and he preferreth the latter end of the just, and glorieth that he hath God for his Father. Let us see then if his words be true, and let us prove what shall happen unto him; and we shall know what his end shall be. For if he be the true Son of God He will defend him and will deliver him from the hands of his enemies. Let us examine him by outrages and tortures, that we may know his meekness and may try his patience. Let us condemn him to a most shameful death, for there shall be respect had unto him by his words.' It is not certain that these words refer in the original to our Lord, but if they are taken as of His treatment by the wicked world, they illustrate, in that greatest and most typical instance, how worldliness is engendered by falsehood, issues in cruelty, and in hatred of light and of God.

And, lastly, the holy writer finds the cause of all this error in the original forgetfulness of the doctrine of retribution, which implies the survival both of soul and body after death, inasmuch as the deeds

which are to be recompensed, either by rewards or punishments, have been committed both in soul and body. 'These things they thought, and were deceived, for their own malice blinded them, and they knew not the secrets of God, nor hoped for the wages of justice, nor esteemed the honour of holy souls. For God created man incorruptible, and in the image of His own likeness He made him, but by the envy of the devil death came into the world, and they follow him, that are of his side. But the souls of the just are in the hand of God, and the torments of death shall not touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die and their departure was taken for misery, and their going away from us to be utter destruction, but they are in peace. And though in the sight of men they suffered torments, their hope is full of immortality. Afflicted in a few things, in many they shall be well rewarded, because God tried them and found them worthy of Himself.'

A passage like this shows us, among other things, if we read it in the light of our experience of the philosophies of the days in which we live, how unchanging are the devices, in all ages of humanity, of the spirit of rebellion against the moral law, how it strains after any theory which may deliver men from their obligations, and from the menaces of a violated conscience, and also how degraded human nature instinctively turns in anger against any example that it feels to be a condemnation of its own follies and delusions. Worldly and sensual men in all ages are not content to leave at peace those who choose to believe in what the others consider a foolish superstition as to their own responsibility to a judge hereafter. They must needs persecute and kill them, because their lives imply a rebuke to the laxity

of others. The one miserable attraction of the infidel creed is that it seems to promise immunity from future punishments, for the sake of which immunity the great mass of men would be ready to sacrifice the hope of future rewards. It is one of the most striking witnesses to the real authority of conscience that so it is. Those to whom our Lord was speaking did not, of course, acknowledge the Book of Wisdom or any other of the books of Scripture beside the writings of Moses. It was the reproach made against them by our Lord in this place that they did not know the Scriptures, from which He might doubtless have brought many passages to witness to the truth of the traditional belief as to the future life and the resurrection. Our Lord does not disguise the great loss which they had incurred thereby, and, among all the privileges of the Jewish nation, St. Paul reckons the first to have been their possession of the oracles of God. These Sadducees had deprived themselves of the benefit of this privilege, which, perhaps, was greater to them in proportion than it might be in the case of Christians who deprive themselves of any portion of the Scriptures such as the books which are called Deuterocanonical. In many respects that is an immense loss to Protestants. But it was a greater loss to these sectaries to be without the prophecies, extending through the whole of Scripture, which prepared men for the reception of our Lord as the promised Redeemer. But our Lord, in His great compassion, and also for the sake of making the truth more evident to them by using that portion only of the Sacred Writings which they themselves acknowledged, goes on in the second part of His argument to give them a proof of the truth which they denied from the Books of Moses himself.

‘And, as concerning the resurrection of the dead, that the dead rise again, Moses also showed at the bush,’ that is in the part of his writings where he speaks of the burning bush. ‘Have you not read what was spoken by God, saying to you, how God spake to him, saying, I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob?’³ For He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all live unto Him. You therefore greatly err.’ In the text which is here quoted from the Book of Exodus, Moses is expressly commanded to tell the people that this is the message from God. God had first said of Himself, in answer to the question of Moses, ‘I Am that Am,’ speaking of Himself as the living God, the source of all existence, and Himself the only true Existence. Then He commands His prophet, ‘Thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you.’ He does not say, I was the God of Abraham and the two others, but I am the God, and moreover what He is about to do is to bring the people into the land that was promised by Him to those Patriarchs. Those of whom God speaks in this way must be living in His sight, as they were when they received the promise. True, their bodies were dead and buried, and the very care taken according to the Providence of God for their bones and dust, implied the prospect of their future resurrection. No one doubted that their souls lived to Him Who speaks of them in the language of the text, and it was a perfectly gratuitous and unreasonable inference that their future life was to be the life of the soul without the body.

³ Exodus iii. 6.

According to this way of interpreting the passage before us, the resurrection of the body is left to be inferred by our Lord from the continued life of the soul, which would be an imperfect life if the separation between body and soul is always to be. Some of the Fathers understand it as if there were no distinction drawn between the soul, which lived in the next world, and the body which had lived in this, as if the Patriarchs were here spoken of by our Lord as still living, though they were sleeping the sleep of death, and as if the fact that God spoke of them in that way was a proof that their life was to be revived, as when one wakes out of sleep. St. Paul says of Abraham, that he showed his great faith as to the promise made him, 'before God, Whom he believed, Who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things that are not as those that are,'⁴ not surely things that are never to be, but things which He has determined to bring about by His Almighty power. These interpretations come to this. The Patriarchs are said by God to be living to Him. This would not be the case if they either had not now life, or were not to have it. They have life now, because their souls are living to Him, and the life of the soul is the principle of the life of the body, without which the creature of God is imperfect. Or they have life now because He regards them as living, not only in the soul which has never died, but also in the body, which He intends in His own good time and way to restore to life.

It would appear also that we have here a fresh instance of our Lord's watchfulness to seize every opportunity of laying down the great doctrines which were to be taught afterwards by His Church, and

⁴ Rom. iv. 17.

those in particular for which He knew there would be the greatest need, or for which He foresaw the greatest opposition. The instance of the duty of giving to Cæsar was one of these, and it may well be supposed that the doctrine of the resurrection was another. The duty of submission to the civil ruler may have been one which He foresaw as especially repugnant to the Jews, on account of their national pride. The doctrine of the resurrection of the body might be more or less familiar to the Jews, but it was certainly a strange doctrine to the heathen, who were within a few years to form so large a proportion of the multitudes that were to flock into the fold. We see this from the pains to which St. Paul had to put himself to explain it to the Thessalonians and Corinthians, and the difficulty it created among some of his hearers at Athens. We may suppose both that our Lord had in His mind the difficulties of His future Apostle when He laid down this doctrine, and also that St. Paul when he came to write his Epistles was not unmindful of the words of his Lord.

We see that in neither case does our Lord anticipate the line of argument or reasoning of the Apostle, but we can see that the truth, as our Lord has put it in a few words, may well have served as the text which St. Paul explained. In the great passage to the Corinthians, St. Paul first of all simply states the Christian truth, and insists upon its necessity as the foundation of the faith which he and the other Apostles taught, the whole of which is founded on the Resurrection of our Lord, the pattern and cause of our own future resurrection. He then answers the question, 'How do the dead rise, and with what body do they come?' by the analogy of the power of

God as sown in nature all around us. This is practically resting it on the power of God, and he ends his argument, if such it be called, by laying down with authority the leading features of the mystery of resurrection, and by a practical conclusion, which may be compared by contrast to the reasoning which we have quoted from the Book of Wisdom, as used by the disbelievers in future life or retribution. Just as they are represented by the Wise Man as making the apparent end of all things for man, when he dies, a reason for all sorts of vice, so St. Paul, from the truth of the future resurrection, urges the vigorous and strenuous practice of all good works, which have so great a promise held forth to them. 'Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast and immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.'⁵

Our Lord's last words to the Sadducees must not be left without a short comment. He widens the question as to the life of the Patriarchs of whom He speaks, by the universal statement with which He concludes: 'All live to Him, you therefore do greatly err.' He speaks as if the few words in which He corrected the Sadducees contained a great principle, the denial of which involved an enormous error. In truth, the more we consider these simple words, it becomes more and more evident how great is the range of truth which they cover. It is not only that the Patriarchs were living at the time that the words were spoken to Moses. The mention of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which implies their life, was for a special purpose and had a great meaning. It involved the reason why God now made Himself

⁵ 1 Cor. xv.

known, through Moses, to His people, and informed them that now at last He was about to execute the promise which had been made to their forefathers. The words implied that the Patriarchs had much to do with the fulfilment of the promise, not simply that it was a promise that had been made them, but one the fulfilment of which was a matter in which they had a present and a living interest. If God was now about to carry out His designs, they were also designs which were known to those ancient saints in the state in which they were now 'living to Him,' and which they may have represented them to Him in supplication for their accomplishment, as Daniel laid before God the prophecies about the restoration of Jerusalem when he understood that the years of the Captivity had expired, and as Jeremias prayed much for the people at the time of the Machabees. It is impossible to limit the meaning of our Lord's words to some dull, inactive, inoperative life, without powers, without interests, without desires for the glory of God, without the privilege of prayer. We may not know enough to speak definitely on all the questions which may be asked as to the existence at that time of the saints in Limbus. But Scripture and reason both lead us to think that we are much more likely to go wrong in underrating the keen perception and vivid powers of that state, than to err in overrating them. This seems to be implied in what our Lord here says.

He says, moreover, that 'all live' or are alive 'to Him.' To the Sadducees, to the heathen, who were not much different from them as to this point, and to too many even since the Gospel revelation and preaching, to too many even who call themselves Christians, the world beyond the grave was and is a

silent, horrible emptiness. 'In the end of man there is no remedy, and no man hath been known to have returned from Hell.' Men are too glad to conclude that, because no man has come back, therefore there is in the other world no life nor existence at all. And the majority of mankind are so content to persuade themselves that the reproofs of conscience mean nothing, that they think of the dead as positively dead in the fullest sense of death. They heap useless flowers on their graves, but do not either breathe a prayer for them, or think of them as if they had any life or existence at all. The children of the Catholic Church are taught to regard the puny world in which we live as insignificant indeed in point of population as well as of power, in comparison to the myriads of existences that have passed through this mortal life in former generations, and are now distributed, according to the will of their Maker, into various receptacles which He has allotted to them, and in which all are alive to Him with capacities and powers of life very different from those which they exercised here. It is His will that we should know of their existence, and He imparts to us some knowledge concerning them, in order that we may exercise towards them and they may exercise towards us somewhat of that mutual charity which is the universal law of His Kingdom, as far as they are capable of coming within its range, either as intercessors for us or as objects of our intercession. The more we know of God, the more we know of them who are His in this Kingdom of manifold life. He does not tell us all, but He tells us many things concerning them, enough to enable us to praise Him better and understand His goodness more, and the day will come when in this matter also

we shall attain perfect knowledge in Him. But what a difference between the devout Christian, who knows at least something concerning the saints and angels, concerning the holy souls of Purgatory, something in general concerning the countless hosts of souls who are alive to Him in all their various states, and the ancient and modern Sadducees, who would deny to all these creatures of God the existence and the multifarious capacities which He has given them !

CHAPTER IX.

The Great Commandment.

St. Matt. xxii. 34—40 ; St. Mark xii. 28—34 ; *Story of the Gospels*, § 140.

THE answer given by our Lord to the question of the Sadducees seems to have produced an impression in His favour in the minds of the multitude. The Sadducees were probably not popular with the generality of the people, who were perhaps not sorry to see this dominant and overbearing faction put to silence. St. Matthew tells us that 'the multitudes hearing it, were in admiration of His doctrine,' and we learn from St. Mark, that one of the scribes, 'answering said to Him, Master, Thou hast said well.' He adds that after that they durst not ask Him any more questions. The question, therefore, of which St. Mark speaks in the next verses was a question raised by an individual scribe, and not the result of any combination or conspiracy to entrap Him in His teaching. 'And there came one of the scribes that had heard them reasoning together, and seeing

that He had answered them well, asked Him, which was the great commandment in the Law? And Jesus answered him, The first commandment of all is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one God. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind, and with thy whole strength. And the second is like to this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is no other commandment greater than these. On these two commandments dependeth the whole Law and the Prophets.' The preamble which our Lord quotes to the great commandment is the declaration of the unity of God,¹ which was the special truth which Israel was commissioned among the nations of the old world to uphold, and which might have been altogether lost therein, if it had not been for the witness borne to it by the chosen people, notwithstanding their many defections from it in practice. There seems to have been some formal connection intended between the unity of the Godhead, which it was the great boast of the nation to have as its profession of faith, and the words which follow, in which the Jews were taught to witness to this article of their faith, by the supreme and only love of that God above all things.

There is nothing in the text before us to lead us to suppose that the question of this scribe was asked in any spirit of cavil, and our Lord, without going into any more formal explanation than what was contained in the simple recitation of the words of the law in Deuteronomy, gave His sanction to the conduct of His questioner in the words which conclude the incident. We have already remarked

¹ Deut. vi. 4.

that this question and answer occur here for the second time in the history, having been put at an earlier point, just before the deliverance of the Parable of the Good Samaritan. The two occasions are, however, different, not only in point of time. On the former occasion we are told that a certain lawyer or scribe, stood up tempting Him, and asked Him what he was to do to possess eternal life? Our Lord answered Him by a counter question, How did he read in the Law? The lawyer answered Him by quoting these words about the love of God, and then our Lord said to him, Thou hast answered well, this do, and thou shalt live. Then the scribe went on to the further question, But who is my neighbour? The statement of St. Luke, that the questioner spoke 'tempting' Him, as it is in our version, must not be pressed so far as to seem to indicate a cavilling spirit in this other scribe. The word really means nothing more than that he was making trial of our Lord, finding out how He would answer a question very much discussed in those days. But in the former account which has just been given, the question is formally put by our Lord Himself, and not by the scribe.

There seems little doubt that this was, as has been said, one of the moot questions of the day, having become so, probably, in consequence of the greater intercommunication that had existed of later times between the Jews and the nations of the Greek and Roman Empires with which they had been brought so much into political relations, and among whom the Jewish communities of the dispersion had been so providentially spread. This was a preparation for a far greater and more complete fusion than any Israelite as yet dreamed of, and it involved a

great departure from the ordinary tone of thought on such subjects in which so many generations had been trained. And yet this commandment of the love of God above all things stood at the very head of the Law, as promulgated in Deuteronomy, and seems to have been understood as implying a contrast to the ceremonial precepts which were peculiar to the Jews, involving their inferiority in obligation. For the real question seems to have been between the precept and the other like it on the one hand, and the ceremonial observances on the other. We gather this from the answer of the scribe to our Lord's declaration about the great commandment, for the scribe says, 'Thou hast said in truth that there is one God and there is no other beside Him, and that He should be loved with the whole heart, and with the whole understanding, and with the whole soul, and with the whole strength, and that to love one's neighbour as oneself, is a greater thing than all holocausts and sacrifices.' The answer seems to imply that this question had been in his mind when he spoke to our Lord, though the comparison was not in any way expressed. And something of this kind may have been a reason for the preservation of the question and answer in this context, as if it had been opportune that the doctrine should be put forward at this especial time, and in course of our Lord's last teaching in the Temple.

The exact meaning of the fourfold division or obligation of the love of God, may be in some respects uncertain, and we have already said a few words as to the explanation which is commonly given.² If the heart and soul and strength and mind stand for various faculties and powers in man, and

² See *The Preaching of the Cross*, part i. (*Public Life*, vol. ix. p. 356).

if the total of these makes up the whole duty by which this precept is fulfilled towards his Creator, the heart seems to stand for the will, the mind for the intelligence, the soul for the sensitive faculties and powers as distinct from the spirit, and the strength for all the forces and energies which man can bring to bear on the accomplishment of what he is wholly bent upon and devoted to, whether those forces and energies be considered as bodily or as spiritual. Or perhaps the words may be considered in another way, taking man as one, without so much distinction between one set of faculties and another set, but speaking of him as entirely occupied and absorbed in the full extent of all the powers of his nature, leaving none unspent to the utmost in the service of his Lord.

We may thus suppose that the love of God with the whole heart may mean the perfectly single and unrivalled and unshared love of God as reigning in the heart, as is the case of those who devote themselves to His service with the single and most pure and most perfectly absorbing devotion, who know and have never known any love, however lawful, by the side of His, as if there were no fibre of love in them which had ever been used for any one but Him, and which had been allowed to remain idle and unstrained for Him. The love of God with the whole mind, in the same way, may mean the entire occupation of the whole mental powers in their perfection and fullest ripeness and expansion, through a long life, upon Him and what belongs to His service, so that every thought and conclusion of the reason, every flight of the intellect, every imagination of the fancy, has been given to Him either mediately or immediately. Those, for instance, who have served

Him faithfully in heart, but yet have had other interests by the side of His, though not contrary to His, might be said to have loved Him, but not in this sense with their whole heart. And those whose thoughts have been drawn away from Him by a thousand lawful cares and pursuits, may not have offended Him by them, but at the same time they cannot be said to have served Him with the whole of their mind.

In much the same way, again, the service and love of the whole soul is given to Him by those who have known no measure in their love or service, of necessity or of devotion, as those who have served Him not only up to the requirements of the Law or even of the counsels, but have risked, so to say, their whole life and being that they may serve Him more entirely, as in the case of the merchant seeking goodly pearls, who, when he has found one, sells all that he has and buys it. There are many pursuits in life which men follow without throwing, as we say, their whole soul away upon them, and it is this which is to be done for the service and love of God. And lastly, it is quite possible to serve God with a certain amount of faithfulness and without deliberately violating any of His commandments, and yet not to bring to His service the whole force and exertion of which our character is capable. There is here a lack of loving Him with our whole strength. The four several points which are mentioned in the commandment before us may well be deeply pondered. And the more this is done, the more easy will it become to understand why all of the four are necessary to the picture of that perfect and universal love of God which consists in that absolute and perfect employment of all the powers of our being in the service of

Him, which it is the proper homage of our nature to render Him. It must be remembered that these words were spoken of the love of God under the Old Covenant, when as yet the indebtedness of man to Him was not measured, to ordinary minds, by the excess of love shown in the Incarnation and in the Passion. There is hardly a limit to the range of the commandment to those who would fulfil its perfect meaning, and at the same time it remains true that the obligation, as far as it is of rigorous precept, is not disobeyed by any man who 'keeps the Commandments.' Here also our Lord lays down a text on which His Apostles were to comment under the guidance of the Holy Ghost. 'And Jesus seeing that he had answered wisely, said to him, Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God, and no man after that durst ask Him any question.'

It does not appear that the day was as yet far advanced. Our Lord and the Apostles had come to Jerusalem early, as was their wont, and the questions of the scribes and priests had not taken very long. Perhaps the appearance of the Chief Priests on the scene had prevented the usual course of our Lord's instruction of the people, who were listening to Him as He refuted one set of objections after another, rather as the lookers on at a conflict of arguments than as direct listeners to the doctrine He was teaching. Now there seemed to be a pause—the enemies of our Lord were answered or so silenced, that they were afraid to commit themselves again to a conflict in which they had so evidently the worst. It is very well to contrast this account of the teaching in the Temple with that given us by St. John of the incidents at the last great feast, that of Tabernacles, not much more than six months before this time.

All the circumstances are in marked contrast. Then our Lord let it be doubtful, even to some of His own disciples, whether He would appear at the feast or not. After letting it seem that He was not coming, He went up, we are told, as it were secretly, and appeared in the Temple in the middle of the week during which the feast lasted. On that occasion we hear of many disputes and discussions between Him and the Pharisees, in the course of which He seems constantly to avoid any too open reprehension of them. He seems to explain things which might offend them, and to avoid what may aggravate them. They act with an air of authority towards Him. They even at one time send ministers to apprehend Him. When they take up stones to stone Him, He hides Himself, by what looks like flight. They more than once try to lay hands upon Him, and no one seems to remonstrate when they excommunicate from their synagogue the poor man whose only crime it was to have been healed by Him of the blindness in which he was born, and to have confessed Him to be a prophet.³

But our Lord's whole demeanour to them is very different now. The solemn entrance into Jerusalem in triumph is the beginning, and the cleansing of the Temple seems to strike terror into them at once. He had done this act once before, at the very beginning of His Ministry, but after that He had not lingered long in the Holy City. On that occasion they had asked Him with what authority He acted, as they asked it now, in both cases having reference in particular to His cleansing of the Temple. Then He had answered them enigmatically in the words in which He spoke of their destroying the Temple, and

³ See St. John vii. 14, x. 21.

His raising it up again in three days. This time, however, He very plainly refused to give any explanation, referring them to the baptism of St. John, which they were afraid either to acknowledge as from God, or to characterize as from men. He had gone on to reproach them as being the last to enter in the Kingdom of Heaven, after even the publicans and harlots, who had shown them the example of conversion at St. John's preaching, which they had not followed, notwithstanding the striking witness which the others had borne to the workings of grace. The Parables of the Two Sons and the Husbandmen had been directly levelled at them. And now He had finished by reducing them all to silence, and there was actually a pause in the succession of discussions and disputes, because they had nothing more to say.

CHAPTER X.

The Son of David.

St. Matt. xxii. 41—46 ; St. Mark xii. 35—43 ; St. Luke xx. 41—47 ;
Story of the Gospels, § 140.

THE Pharisees seem to have left the part of the Temple in which our Lord was teaching, after the answer which He had given to the question about paying tribute. They returned again after the question of the Sadducees, in whose confutation they seem to have taken great pleasure. They were present, therefore, as it appears, at the question of the Great Commandment, and at the answer which one of their own body made to our Lord's reply. There was no open hostility, for the moment, in their behaviour towards Him, but the silence from all questioning, which they adopted from this moment, is noted by the Evangelists, as if it was something which surprised them and which they thought worth recording. Then our Lord in His great mercy broke the silence Himself, putting before them a simple question, the right solution of which would apparently have led them on to higher things, and more true thoughts about Himself, and the duties incumbent upon them at the present crisis of their trial.

‘ And the Pharisees being gathered together, And Jesus answering said, teaching in the Temple, How do the scribes say, that Christ is the Son of David ? ’

St. Matthew puts the question as directly addressed to the Pharisees themselves, 'What think you of Christ? Whose Son is He? They say to him, David's. He saith to them, How then doth David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, The Lord said to my Lord, sit on My right hand, until I make Thy enemies Thy footstool? For David himself saith by the Holy Ghost, The Lord said to my Lord, sit on my right hand, until I make thy enemies thy footstool. David therefore himself calleth Him Lord, and whence is He his Son?' The difference between the two accounts is easily explained, for our Lord was teaching the people, and put the question to them about the scribes, turning afterwards directly to them for the confirmation of His statement about them, and repeating the question to them before all. 'And no man was able to answer Him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask Him any more questions.'

These questions of the Pharisees and Sadducees and others, seem to have been put to our Lord on the Tuesday in Holy Week, and it is often considered doubtful whether that was not the last day on which He taught in the Temple. But in any case it must either have been the last day or the last day but one—for it is not thought that He taught in the Temple on the Thursday, on the evening of which the Last Supper was celebrated. The Evangelists may mean, therefore, to insist upon this silence of our Lord's enemies as remarkable in itself, and the Wednesday may have been reserved by Him for His final denunciation of the Scribes and Pharisees before leaving the Temple altogether, which was followed by His sitting on the Mount of Olives over against the Temple, and delivering His prophecies concerning

its destruction, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the end of the world. This denunciation of the Pharisees would thus be a teaching of our Lord apart from any other, and would have a special solemnity of its own. This question of the Sonship of Christ to David seems to have been the very last of our Lord's teachings, in the ordinary sense of the word, the last opportunity given to the Scribes and Pharisees of lifting themselves out of the darkness in which they lay.

The passage quoted by our Lord is, as we all know, from Psalm cix., the Davidic origin of which has never been called in doubt by any reasonable critics, either among Jews or among Christians. In point of fact, our Lord Himself attributes the Psalm to David, and would not have used the quotation if there had been any question on the matter among the Jews of His time. Here again we must insist on our often repeated commentary, that our Lord, when He quotes Scripture, constantly means to direct the attention of His hearers, not only to the particular words which He cites, but also to the whole context of the passage from which the words are taken. The Psalm here quoted is very short, and every verse of it is full of the deepest meaning and the most important doctrine. It is not strange, therefore, if we should suppose that He wished to bring before the minds, especially of the learned men among the audience, the doctrine of which the Psalm is full, and that therein was to be found the key to the difficulty of the Jews in receiving Him as He ought to have been received, as far as that difficulty came from a simple want of knowledge and intelligence of the Scriptures.

Not only is the Psalm in question undoubtedly

of David as its author, but with equal certainty it refers to Christ. No one questioned this fact at the time at which our Lord adduced it in the Temple, though it would have been obvious to an objector who could do so, with any appearance of truth, to say that David was not speaking of Christ, and that therefore the difficulty alleged by our Lord did not apply. St. Paul, writing to the Hebrew Church, uses the Psalm again, and he uses it of Christ, showing from its words the pre-eminence of Christ over the angels. 'For to which of the angels said He at any time, Sit on My right hand, until I make Thy enemies Thy footstool?' And at the opening of the same passage St. Paul says in the same way, 'To which of the angels hath He said at any time, Thou art My Son, to-day have I begotten Thee?'¹ The teaching of the Psalm may be divided into three heads, for it teaches, first, the Humanity of Christ, in which He is inferior to the Father, secondly, His Divinity, in which He is equal to the Father, and thirdly, His Priesthood after the order of Melchisedec, and therefore His mediatorial office, in which the redemption of the world was to be wrought out by Him, by His sacrifice of Himself on the Cross.

The Human Nature of Christ is shown in the first verse, where His exaltation to the right hand of God is spoken of, and this evidently implies that He is raised to a position to which human nature would have no right of itself. The exaltation of our Lord is constantly attributed to the Father, and the Psalm speaks of it in the first verses, 'The Lord,' that is, God the Father, 'said unto my Lord,' the Incarnate Son in His Human Nature, 'Sit Thou on My right hand until I make Thy enemies Thy footstool.' It

¹ Heb. i. 5-12.

is clear therefore that we have here the Humanity of Christ spoken of as exalted to the right hand of God, that is, raised to the throne of Divine glory. If the Eternal Son is capable of exaltation and of sitting on the right hand of the Father, it is in His Human Nature that that is true. The Psalm then speaks plainly of the power and dominion given to the Sacred Humanity and the triumphant extension of His Kingdom over the whole world. 'The Lord shall send forth the rod of Thy power out of Sion, have Thou dominion in the midst of Thy enemies.' It speaks also of His eternal generation in the following verse, although there is here apparently some difference between the Greek text and the Hebrew, which makes some obscurity. It then announces the Priesthood of the Eternal Son made Man, in words which are taken up again by-and-bye by St. Paul.

It must be noted also that the last verses of the Psalm speak of the effects of the redemption brought about by the sufferings and humiliations of the Mediator, Who is to judge among the nations, dividing the good from the bad, the saved from the lost, Who is also to fill up and repair by His Redeemed the ruined ranks of the angels, whose loss is to be supplied by the humble, and Who is to drink of the brook of humiliations in the way of this mortal life, and be Himself exalted because He so humbled Himself, and He is, to those who follow Him, the cause of their exaltation. This is enough to give a short account of the great truths which are hinted at in this Psalm, and also to make it clear how aptly and how mercifully our Lord selected the question which He put to His enemies and to the people in general, before He proceeded to enter on His Passion.

An inadequate conception of what Christ was to be and of what our Lord the true Christ was, lay at the bottom of all the errors of the Jews. They could not understand the humiliation of the Son of God nor the exaltation of the Son of Man. The truth which they could not fathom was the Unity of the Divine Person in two natures. And yet all their Scriptures bore witness to the truth that Christ was to be both God and Man, Man that He might suffer, God that He might redeem.

Although the Psalm which our Lord here quotes is so full of the highest doctrine, and although the more thoughtful minds among those who heard Him on this occasion may have taken in the whole, or at least some part, of the great range of truth which it set before His own mind, the words which He cited in particular did not go beyond one point, out of many which belong to the context. But it is significant that that point suggested immediately by the words should have been just what it was. It spoke of the enemies of our Lord being made His footstool, that is, put under His feet, by the action of the Father, while He himself was sitting in majesty at the Father's right hand. It might have been possible to choose some other text of Sacred Scripture as speaking of the exaltation of the Incarnate Son without any distinct reference to this triumph over His enemies. But that would not have placed that triumph and victory so pointedly before the minds of the audience, and we may therefore suppose that the selection of the passage had also some designed reference to the rejection of the Son of David by some who would afterwards be forced, against their will, to acknowledge His power.

This is the point which our Blessed Lord chooses

to set before the minds of the Chief Priests and Pharisees on this occasion, while in His own Sacred Heart He was counting over all the numberless issues and fruits of His great Sacrifice in time and in eternity. Thus this question seems to carry on that contemplation of His Sacrifice, which had been uppermost in His mind all through the days which were now wearing on to the final consummation of the great counsel of the redemption of the world, at the same time that it held out, to the better disposed among the hearers, a solution of the chief difficulties which prevented their conversion. True, it seemed to suggest, your Messiah is the Son of David, but He is much more, and if He were no more than a Son of David in the sense which you attach to the words, it would be of little use to your souls. He is the Son of David, but He is also David's Lord, and to be exalted to the throne of power at the right hand of God, and when He comes men will certainly fail to understand Him if they do not begin by recognizing in Him a Divine Person as well as a Human Teacher. The Jews, to whom our Lord spoke, had abundant evidence, as He had over and over again told them, that His words were to be received as the words of a Divine Messenger, for His Mission was accredited by the most undoubted miracles as well as by the witness of prophecy and the contemporaneous testimony of the Baptist, and in other ways His appearance as a Man was nothing against the truth which He proclaimed of Himself that He was the Son of God. That is, He was such as the Messiah was foretold to be.

We have often alluded to the difference of opinion as to the exact order of the events of the Holy Week of the Passion, and it is natural that it should be so.

The Evangelists do not mark off the several days on which particular events took place, and there is even some discrepancy in the manner in which their narratives are understood by different writers. Even the date of the Day of Palms, which we suppose to have been what we now call Palm Sunday, is not absolutely certain. The same may be said as to the day on which the Temple was cleansed for the second time, and as to the subsequent teaching in the Temple, which we suppose to have continued till the Wednesday in Holy Week, on which day our Lord left the Temple for the last time, and on which day also Judas made his compact with the Chief Priests to betray our Lord. But as to this the Evangelists do not directly inform us. The afternoon of Wednesday might have been spent by our Lord, after leaving the Temple, in the teaching on the Mount of Olives to the disciples, of which we have so full an account given to us by the Evangelists. The Council of the Chief Priests against our Lord could not have taken place after the betrayal by Judas, as when that Council was held, they were still deliberating how to proceed. On the next day, Thursday, our Lord seems not to have gone to Jerusalem in the morning, as had been His custom during the preceding days, and thus Judas could have had no opportunity of making his preparations. He seems to have been kept in ignorance of the precise spot where our Lord would celebrate the Paschal Supper, till he went with the other disciples to the Cenacle in company with our Lord.

We are left therefore somewhat to our own conjectures as to the order of time which it seems best to follow. If, as seems tolerably certain, the cleansing of the Temple did not take place on Palm Sunday,

but on the Monday following, and if the arrangement we have now indicated of the Wednesday and Thursday be correct, there still remains the allotment of the intervening days, which we must suppose to have been occupied by the teaching in the Temple. We seem to discern in the accounts of this teaching a sufficient classification of time and subject to make us fairly safe in distributing it into three parts. First, but after the cleansing of the Temple, there is the questioning of the Chief Priests as to our Lord's authority, which He answers by referring them to another question as to which they had not made up their minds how to answer, the question of the authority of the teaching of St. John Baptist. This is immediately followed by the Parables of the Two Sons and the Wicked Husbandmen, after which there seems to be a pause. Another distinct stage in the history is marked by the questions addressed to our Lord on the subject of paying tribute to Cæsar, and by the Sadducees about the resurrection, but the Parable of the Wedding Supper or the Wedding Garment is interposed between these two stages, and may be considered as belonging to either. Attached to the narrative of the questioning by the Pharisees and Sadducees, is that of the question as to the great commandment, and our Lord's subsequent question about the Son of David. This closes the account of the Temple teaching in all the Evangelists except St. Matthew, of whose additions we shall speak presently. He adds what the others very naturally omit, considering the persons for whom they directly wrote, the great denunciation by our Lord of the Scribes and Pharisees, to the people, and of this teaching St. Mark and St. Luke furnish only a very short summary, giving just a few

verses to the general warning against those false teachers.

We may suppose, therefore, that the arrangement here followed cannot be far wrong in any particular, at least in any particular of importance. It supposes that the cleansing of the Temple was the work of the Monday morning in Holy Week, and was followed by the question as to our Lord's authority, the refusal of our Lord to answer them until they had declared themselves on the authority of His Precursor, the Parables of the Two Sons and the Wicked Husbandmen, and perhaps that of the Wedding Feast and Garment also. To the next day, Tuesday, we suppose to belong the prepared question of the Pharisees and Herodians about the tribute, the question of the Sadducees about the resurrection, the question about the great commandment of the Law, and our Lord's question about the Son of David. The teaching of our Lord on the Scribes and Pharisees may be supposed to have been delivered on the last morning on which He was ever in the Temple, that of the Wednesday in Holy Week, on which day also took place the Council of the Chief Priests against our Lord, and the agreement about His betrayal by Judas. The afternoon of this day may have been the time spent by our Lord on the Mount of Olives, when He foretold the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world. It appears that a considerable portion of this teaching was given to four only of the disciples, and if the others were dismissed for the time, this would give an opportunity to Judas to absent himself without remark, and to make his wicked bargain with the Chief Priests, his absence not being noticed by the rest. Before this, however, we must proceed

to the teaching of the Wednesday morning, when our Lord finally took leave of the Temple, after having denounced in the strongest terms the men who were the authorized teachers of the holy people.

CHAPTER XI.

The Scribes and Pharisees.

St. Matt. xxiii. 1—39 ; St. Mark xii. 38—40 ; St. Luke xx. 45—47 ;
Story of the Gospels, § 141.

It was a new thing, as it seems, for the Scribes and Pharisees to be put to utter silence before our Lord. But so it was. On this occasion, probably, the Chief Priests had retired, partly on account of the plan which they had already conceived of procuring His destruction, instead of continuing the controversy in which they were so constantly confuted. There were perhaps among the priests generally many who were more than half inclined to believe on our Lord. They were afraid to come forward, as the sentence of excommunication had been threatened against any who should profess faith in Him. There were some such, as St. John tells us, even among the chief men. The people listened to our Lord's teaching with avidity, and in their presence no attempt could be made against Him.

He had more to say to the Scribes and Pharisees—under whose name the Evangelists, as has been said, mean to include the priests. This was the last time that He was to teach in the Temple, and He had resolved to fulfil His work with them by speaking more openly than before to the people concerning

them. The whole nation was to be involved in the sentence of rejection and reprobation, even although so many private persons were to be found on our Lord's side. For so it is in the providential government of God. The princes and rulers and priests had the frightful responsibility of involving in their own wickedness, those over whom, in various degrees, they bore rule, and making them share in the temporal chastisements with which that wickedness was to be punished. But the people, although they were to suffer with their rulers, were far less guilty than those rulers. In truth, these ecclesiastical leaders were, in the main, responsible for the small success of the mission of our Lord among them, and yet, sitting as they did in the seat of Moses, they still had authority as their guides, and it was important that the people should be taught in what they were to follow, and in what they were not to follow and obey them.

It is the saddest thing in this history, this ruin of the people because of the wickedness of the priests whom they were yet to a certain extent bound to obey. St. Matthew has told us of the intense compassion of our Lord for the people at the time of the first mission of the Apostles to preach. 'Seeing the multitudes, He had compassion on them because they were distressed,¹ and lying like sheep that have no shepherd.'² And this tender compassion of the Sacred Heart has abundant matter furnished to It in the contemplation which is continually presented to It in Christian countries, especially those which lie outside the range of Catholic Unity. Everywhere there are some who call themselves shepherds of the flock, but who, instead of feeding the sheep on the

¹ Gr. ἐσκυλμένοι.

² St. Matt. ix. 36.

true and living pastures, lead them astray to seek pasture on the barren and wintry fields of schism, or on the poisonous fodder of heresy, and who refuse them the care which our Lord has so tenderly provided for them in the Church. To such, many of the denunciations of our Lord against these Scribes and Pharisees will be seen to have a very startling application. The worst feature in the condition of the Jewish nation was the attitude of the ecclesiastics. The worst enemies of the truth, as a class, in non-Catholic countries, are often the clergy, though, when the separation from the Church is hereditary, hundreds enter for life on the dangerous profession of teachers of schism and heresy in perfect good faith. But they are almost forced by their position to do what the men we are speaking of did, that is, to keep souls back from our Lord. So again, the worst calamity that can befall a Catholic nation is anything like corruption or the spirit of error, moral, social, political, or doctrinal, prevailing among the ministers of the altar.

Our Lord seems to have spoken on two different occasions concerning the Scribes and Pharisees. At least, St. Mark and St. Luke give us a short account of some language concerning them which our Lord addressed to His disciples in the hearing of the people, and the first Evangelist gives us a long discourse, addressed to the multitudes and the disciples, on the same subject. This last discourse appears to be distinct from that spoken of by the two other Evangelists, which may perhaps be placed after our Lord's teaching on the Tuesday afternoon, while the other and longer harangue may seem to have been delivered on the Wednesday morning.

‘And He said to them in His doctrine,’ or teaching,

‘in the hearing of all the people, He said to His disciples, Beware of the scribes, who love to walk in long robes, and love salutations in the market-place, and to sit in the first chairs in the synagogues, and to have the highest places at suppers, and the chief rooms at feasts, who devour the houses of widows under the pretence of long prayers, feigning long prayer. These shall receive greater damnation.’³ These words seem to be a warning to the disciples, who were to take the place of the scribes, or teachers of the law, as the new dispensation. They were not to imitate the love of pre-eminence and personal dignity which was so conspicuous in the scribes. The words echo the warning which He had given at an earlier period, against the hypocrisy, that is, the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. Our Lord thinks that the warning against taking pleasure in the respect and deference which cannot but wait upon the position of one who teaches in His Name can never be out of place. The only words in the passage which seem to require commentary are those in which He speaks of the scribes as ‘devouring widows’ houses’ on the pretence of making long prayers. This may refer to the recital of long forms of prayer, perhaps for the repose of the souls of the husbands whom they had lost. The scribes may have recommended it as a duty to the widows in question that these long prayers for the departed should be made, and in this there would have been nothing but piety. But with these scribes the real object was that they themselves might profit by the money of these widows, which they recommended them to spend in procuring these prayers. Thus their wickedness is specially noted by our Lord,

* St. Mark xii. 38—40 ; St. Luke xx. 45—47 ; *Story of the Gospels*, § 140.

Who says they shall receive greater damnation. For what they did was under cover of devotion, while in truth it was for their own interest merely that they had in view. Thus religion was used sacrilegiously. The money may have been represented as the natural offering to themselves for the labour of their prayers, and it may have been a grievous burthen to the widows, who had their families to provide for, who were thus deprived of what they had a prior right to, just as the parents who were defrauded by the offerings which the Pharisees taught the people to make to the Corban.

These warnings, as has been said, may have been delivered to the disciples, in the presence of the people, at the end of that day's teaching in the Temple of which we have last spoken. At a different time, that is, on the following morning, our Lord uttered that most severe and pregnant condemnation of the Jewish priesthood, which St. Matthew alone, as writing for the Jewish Christians, has recorded, and which ended with the final leave-taking of Jerusalem and the Temple, declaring that they should not see His Face till the day when they cried, 'Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord.'

This great discourse may easily be divided into three parts. In the first of these,⁴ our Lord enjoins on the people obedience to the authoritative teaching of the Scribes and Pharisees, notwithstanding the evil example of their lives, and their great unfaithfulness to the trust committed to them. He then passes, in the second part of the discourse, to a succession of invectives, in which woes are denounced on the Scribes and Pharisees for certain great sins.⁵

⁴ St. Matt. xxiii. 1—12.

⁵ St. Matt. xxiii. 13—31.

These 'woes' are eight in number, a repetition of the number of the Beatitudes, which has not escaped the notice of Christian writers. We shall speak of these presently in detail. The last of these 'woes' is founded on the fact that the Scribes and Pharisees 'built the sepulchres of the prophets, and adorned the monuments of the just, and said, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.' Our Lord takes out of their own mouths the confession that they were the children of the men who had slain the prophets. This leads, then, to the third part of the discourse.⁶ He takes them at their word, and bids them 'fill up the measure of their fathers.' He predicts that He will send them prophets and wise men, and scribes, all of whom they will ill-treat in various ways, and thus bring on themselves the chastisement for all the sins of the kind which have been committed from the beginning of the world to the end. He says nothing about His own murder, except as it is included in this. The speech ends with the famous denunciation, 'Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them who are sent unto thee! . . . Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, you shall not see Me henceforth till you say, Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord.' The discourse thus gradually increases in gravity and severity until it reaches the full height of the sentence of final reprobation on the apostate Synagogue. Even that sentence, however, is tempered by the prophetic clause which implies the promise that, in the end of all things, Israel and Jerusalem shall come back to their God.

⁶ St. Matt. xxiii: 32-39.

The first part of the discourse, as has been said, is addressed directly, both to the multitude and to the disciples. 'The Scribes and Pharisees have sitten in the chair of Moses. All things, therefore, whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do, but according to their works do ye not, for they say and do not.' The precept is therefore both positive and negative. The people are to obey the priests who sit in the chair of Moses in all things they tell them to do, and they are not to follow the examples and lives of the priests. The chair of Moses represented the Divine authority in the Jewish Church, and the people were therefore always safe in obeying it. The obligation involved a promise that the chair should never command anything that was contrary to the Divine Law, and if it could have been allowed to do so, of course the obligation would have ceased, and God would never have left a state of things in existence in which consciences were obliged to obey two conflicting authorities at the same time. The Jewish hierarchy was doomed at the time at which our Lord spoke these words, and was to be succeeded by the Christian Church in its authority over the obedience of the people. But there was yet to be a short interval during which the authority was to linger in the Synagogue, and the priests represented Moses as long as that interval lasted. But the people were nevertheless in the hard case of having a set of teachers in authority whose lives did not correspond to their teaching. Their lives were not to be followed, though their teaching was to be obeyed, and a deliverance was soon to be found by the entire removal of the Synagogue, and the substitution for it of the Christian authority. In the meantime, the precept laid down was binding.

It might have been expected by those who were not well read in the knowledge of human nature, that these teachers, who did not live up to their own teaching, would err in allowing to others the laxity which they permitted to themselves. But the exact contrary was the case, and this again might have been foreseen by those who knew human nature well. The teachers who are the most severe upon others are not always the most severe upon themselves, and those who are most indulgent to others are often the hardest upon themselves. It was said to a great but very severe preacher, that his sermons terrified men, while his life reassured them. The severity of the Scribes and Pharisees to others was contradicted by their laxity to themselves, and in this way they not only brought discredit on their office, but made many people think that obedience to the Law was impossible. The consequence was a very great relaxation of morality. 'They bind heavy and insupportable burthens,'⁷ and lay them on men's shoulders, but with a finger of their own they will not move them.' Our Lord's complaint of the Scribes is not, therefore, their laxity, but that their laxity showed itself in the heavy requirements which they exacted of others. They were careless of their own obligations, and therefore indifferent as to the amount which they laid on the people, as if the virtues which they did not practise might be put to their credit because they required others to practise them. And the result was a measureless severity, which showed no consideration to human frailty, and held out no helping hand to those who groaned under the heavy burthens put upon them.

'And all their works they do for to be seen of men.

⁷ Gr. 'Difficult to support.'

For they make their phylacteries broad, and enlarge their fringes. And they love the first places at feasts, and the first chairs in the synagogues, and salutations in the market-place, and to be called by men, Rabbi.' The strictness which they insisted on is accounted for by their doing all their works 'for to be seen of men.' It was a part of their hypocrisy, that they might not appear to lower the standard which they had to teach. The applause of men was to them instead of the witness of their own conscience, or rather, the applause of men was their resource against that witness. Our Lord had pointed out to these priests, quite early in His Ministry, the reason why they could not believe Him. 'How can you believe, who receive glory one from another, and the glory which is from God alone you do not seek?'⁸ Here He had set His finger upon their wound. The love of human esteem had, in the first instance, prevented them from acknowledging themselves sinners, from joining in the penitential movement which was stirred up by the preaching of the Baptist, and their turning away from Him involved, as our Lord had pointed out, their whole subsequent history. They might have known the prophecies, and understood the Scriptures, and witnessed the miracles, but if human respect was the standard to which they looked, what was the use of all these means of grace?

The lesson here taught is a fearful one, repeated over and over again in the history of mankind, and never so pointedly illustrated as in the history of ecclesiastics who cannot be brought to repentance. It is this love of human praise that our Lord especially marks for reprobation in these scribes. In all states

⁸ St. John v. 44.

of society there must be some who are placed in the first seats at feasts or in synagogues, and these honours are allotted to the ranks and positions which men occupy, whether worthily or not. They may be accepted as a part of the work or office which men discharge, but they are no guarantees that the work is done or the office discharged worthily. Those who hold such positions may love the work or the opportunities which it affords them of serving God and doing good to men, but when they come to love the honours which accompany it for their own sakes, they are in danger of satisfying their consciences with external applause, instead of calling themselves to a severe account for their discharge of duty. The honour should awaken a sense of responsibility, and so should suggest sentiments of humility and compunction, which ought to make men desire not to receive expressions of respect for what ought to be a motive of self-abasement. Our Lord goes on to add other considerations, which are a sort of digression from this main subject, except that they show how Christians ought to receive such notices so as to profit by it.

‘But be not you called Rabbi. For one is your Master, and all you are brethren. And call no one your father upon earth, for one is your Father, Who is in Heaven. Neither be ye called masters, for one is your master, Christ. He that is the greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled, and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.’ This is one of the first utterances of our Blessed Lord concerning a subject which was very dear indeed to His Sacred Heart—the Christian community or household which He came to form, the Church which was

to have so many features of its own distinct from the Synagogue, and to become the delight of His own Heart. It was to have many characteristics of its own, and chief among these was to be the unity and charity of its children, all being knit together in unity by the personal communication between each one of its members and Himself, and the supernatural working of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Love. He seems to pause in His discourse—if this discourse was all delivered at once—and to step aside from His direct treatment of the subject before Him, the Scribes and Pharisees, in order to dwell in a few pregnant and most fruitful words on some of the characteristics of Christian society.

‘Be not you called Rabbi. For one is your Master, and all you are brethren. And call none your father upon earth, for one is your Father, Who is in Heaven. Neither be ye called masters (teachers), for one is your Master, Christ.’ Not that there was no distinction of offices in the Christian society. It was, on the contrary, to be made up of a great number of varieties and gradations of offices, all set up for the common good. But all of these were to be participations and reflections of the relations in which God and our Lord have placed themselves to us, penetrating and giving life to all, and reaching the soul of every one with a power and influence which come straight from above. It is God Who is our Teacher, in and through all the various orders of teachers in His Church. It is God Who is our Father, the Father of each soul as well as of all together, and the earthly channels through which His Fatherly love and care come home to us, are nothing at all without Him and are meant only to help us to love Him and trust in Him, and throw all our cares upon Him.

The Christian society is distinguished from what was before it by the more immediate and close union between each member of Christ's Body and God, through the action of the Holy Ghost and the sacraments of the Church, to which there was no counterpart under the Old Law.

It was natural in that old system that the influence and action of individual teachers and guides should be much more prominent, as in the case of the eminent Rabbis whose names have come down to us, who gathered around them schools of personal followers, and whose word was almost law to their disciples. There is nothing of this kind in the Church, where the sacraments and means of grace do not depend for their efficacy upon the personal qualities of their ministers, where there is a more regular system of doctrine which is also independent of individuals, and where the most personal instrument, as it seems, the instrument of the Word of God, has its weight from the message rather than the messenger, and from the grace, both in the preacher and in the hearer, which accompanies its legitimate delivery. In bodies outside the Church we see the influence of personal peculiarities, idiosyncrasies, and even of attachments between teachers and taught, far more than in the Church, in which, if there is danger of personal considerations becoming too great, the evil can be at once corrected by authority and discipline. The Rabbis could not say as St. Paul, 'We preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ, our Lord, and ourselves your servants, through Jesus,'⁹ though in the cases of communities outside the Church, in which the danger exists, it is but natural that personal teaching should be followed rather than the one

⁹ 2 Cor. iv. 5.

Catholic doctrine. For the unity of the teaching of the Church, the authority with which it is put forward, as well as the close personal union of each soul with our Lord, furnish the grounds on which the fact rests of the comparatively smaller importance of the individual teacher and guide in the Christian system.

This is one of our Lord's sayings which must have sunk into the hearts of the disciples, and which, short and pregnant in themselves, we find developed into beautiful growths, as time went on in the Church. Our Lord, at this stage of His teaching, had not spoken with anything like fulness of His Sacramental Union with the faithful in the Holy Eucharist, nor consequently, of the union between the faithful themselves for which that blessed Gift is the seed. But we find the ideas contained in these verses fructifying, as it were, in the minds and writings of the Apostles. In St. Paul's first Epistle, that to the Thessalonians, we find mention of the distinction of orders in the infant Church. 'We beseech you, brethren, to know them who labour among you, and are over you, in the Lord, and admonish you that you esteem them more abundantly in charity for their work's sake. Have peace with them. And we beseech you, brethren'—here he turns to the priests, just commended to the others—'rebuke the unquiet, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient towards all men.'¹⁰ Thus, in this infant community, not many weeks old, we find at once the distinction between the teachers and the taught, the ministers and those to whom they minister. The doctrine that God is the Father of all, and that they all are brethren, instead of excluding the diversity of orders and offices among

¹⁰ 1 Thess. v. 12—14.

them, gives birth to that diversity. For the Kingdom of God is a Kingdom in which there are numberless gradations, for this, among other reasons, that it is a Kingdom of charity, which feeds itself upon mutual ministrations and offices in the communication of Divine gifts. Thus we are led on to the doctrine that Christians are members of the Body of our Lord.

The idea of the Christian community as the Body of Christ is naturally to be traced to the doctrine of the Blessed Sacrament, as has been said. We find it first in the Epistle to the Romans, 'I say by the grace that is given me, to all that are among you, not to be more wise than it behoveth to be wise'—He has just finished his great argument on the rejection of the Jews and the election of the Gentiles, from both of whom the Roman Church was made up,—'but to be wise unto sobriety, and according as God hath divided to every one the measure of faith. For as in one body we have many members, but all the members have not the same office, so we being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. And having different gifts according to the grace that is given us, whether prophecy, to be used according to the will of faith, or ministry, in ministering, or he that teacheth, in doctrine, he that exhorteth in exhorting, he that giveth with simplicity, he that ruleth with carefulness, he that sheweth mercy with cheerfulness. Let love be without dissimulation, hating that which is evil, cleaving to that which is good, loving one another with the charity of brotherhood, with honour preventing one another.'¹¹ We have here the diversity of ministrations drawn out from the truth that we are all the members of Christ.

¹¹ Rom. xii. 3—10.

The same image is used in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, where St. Paul has occasion to insist on the working of the Holy Ghost in all the variety of the offices in the Church. The growth of the doctrine here consists in the attribution of the various operations in the Church to the Third Person of the Ever Blessed Trinity. This attribution secures their perfect unity and harmony. 'There are diversities of grace, but the same Spirit, and there are diversities of ministries, but the same God, and there are diversities of operation, but the same Lord, Who worketh all in all. And the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man with profit. To one, indeed, by the Spirit, is given the word of wisdom, and to another, the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit, to another, faith in the same Spirit, to another, the grace of healing, in one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another, prophecy, to another the discerning of spirits, to divers kinds of tongues, to another, interpretation of speeches. But all these things one and the self-same Spirit worketh, dividing to every one according as He will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, whereas they are many, yet are one body, so also is Christ. For in one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free, and in one Spirit we have all been made to drink. For the body also is not one member but many.' Then St. Paul goes on with his well-known argument about the members having need of one another—and ends, 'That there might be no schism in the body, but the members might be mutually careful one for another. And if one member suffer anything, all the members suffer with it, or if one

member glory, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the Body of Christ, and members of member.'

St. Paul goes on to apply this to the various degrees and classes in the Church. 'And God indeed hath set some in the Church, first Apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly doctors, after that miracles, then the graces of healings, helps, governments, kinds of tongues, interpretations of speeches. Are all Apostles? Are all prophets? Are all doctors? Are all workers of miracles? Have all the grace of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? Be ye zealous for the better gifts. And yet I show unto you a more excellent way. If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am becoming as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And if I should have prophecy, and should know all mysteries, and all knowledge, and if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burnt, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.' It must be enough to have indicated here the rest of the passage, so well known to Christian hearts, in which the perfect example of our Lord's charity is set forth without its being mentioned as His, a Divine comment indeed on the short words, 'Be not ye called masters, for one is your Master, Christ.'¹²

¹² 1 Cor. xii. 4-14, 25-31, xiii. 1-3. The great passage in the second Epistle to the same Church, about the Christian ministry (iv. v. vi. 1-10), has also its germ in these same words of our Lord, expanded and filled with life and light by the working of the Holy Ghost in the heart of the Apostle. The same may be said of another most sublime passage in the Epistle to the Ephesians, which begins by the prayer of

'He that is the greatest among you shall be your servant, and whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled, and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.' Perhaps the most pregnant commentary on this declaration of our Lord of the principle which was to run through all the arrangements of the hierarchy of the Church, that the-greatest shall be the servant of all, is to be found in the description of the work and conditions of the Apostles given by St. Paul in his Epistles, especially the Epistles to the Corinthians. Then, again, it must be remembered that the first commentary on our Lord's words was not that which was written, but that which consisted in the lives of the Apostles. The circumstances, as it may appear, of the time, forced this wonderful description from the pen of the Apostle, occupied as he was by a thousand cares and afflicted by numberless sorrows. It is conceivable that the Epistles might never have been written, or that they might

St. Paul for his readers that they may be able to 'comprehend with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth,' and goes on to his most urgent exhortation to unity, 'Careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, one Body and one Spirit, as you are called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all.' To them he gives again the enumeration of the diversity of gifts. 'He gave some Apostles, and other some prophets, and other some Evangelists, and other some pastors and doctors, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ, until we all meet into the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, into a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ, . . . doing the truth in charity, we may in all things grow up like Him Who is the head, even Christ, for Whom the whole Body, being compacted and fitly joined together, by what every joint supplieth, according to the operation in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the Body unto the edifying of itself in charity' (Ephes. iii. 14—20, iv. 1—16). In the next chapter St. Paul speaks of the love of Christ for the Church as of the husband for his wife, in the famous passage about the Sacrament of Marriage, and the Epistle ends by the wonderful description of the Christian armour, which is addressed especially to the clergy.

not have come down to us. But it has pleased God that they should have been written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and should remain to all time, not as the plan or constitution of the Christian ministry, which existed before and without them, but as its historical description by one of the first Apostles. They give us the description of the Christian ministry, not, indeed, as to the details of its constitution, of which they take for granted as settled by authority, but as to the fulfilment of our Lord's words therein, and as to the principle of its life.

Immediately after that declaration of St. Paul, which has been already quoted, 'We preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ our Lord, and ourselves your servants through Jesus,' the Apostle pours himself out through a long series of sentences as to the sufferings which this service of souls entailed. 'We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency may be of the power of God, and not of us. In all things we suffer tribulation, and are not distressed, we are straitened, but we are not destitute, we suffer persecution, and are not forsaken, we are cast down, but we perish not, always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh. For we who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you. . . . For all things are for your sakes, that the grace abounding through many may abound in thanksgiving unto the glory of God. . . . For the charity of Christ presseth us, judging this, that if one died for all, then all were dead. And Christ died

for all, that they also that live may now not live to themselves, but unto Him Who died for them and rose again. . . . But all things are of God, Who hath reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation. For God was indeed in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and imputing to them their sins, and He hath placed in us the ministry of reconciliation. For Christ therefore we are ambassadors, God as it were exhorting you by us. For Christ we beseech you, be ye reconciled to God. Him that knew no sin, for us He hath made sin, that we might be made the justice of God in Him. And we helping do exhort you, that you receive not the grace of God in vain.' And then follows the long account of the characteristics of the Christian ministry, 'In much patience, in tribulation, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in prisons, in seditions, in labours, in watchings, in fastings,' and the like, which reminds us of the equally long passage in the first Epistle, where St. Paul declares that he thinks 'God has set forth in us Apostles the last, as it were men appointed to death,' alluding to the games where some gladiators were to fight till they died, 'we both hunger and thirst, and are naked and are buffeted, and have no fixed abode, and we labour working with our hands, we are reviled, and we bless, we are persecuted, and we suffer it, we are blasphemed, and we entreat, we are made as the refuse of this world, the off-scouring of all even until now.'¹³

It may be said that this Christian ministry has not always had to be carried on under such conditions as belonged to the Apostolic age, and the times of persecution, and the remark is true. But the spirit

¹³ 1 Cor. iv. 11—13.

of the Christian ministry is ever the same. It is a life of toil and privation and self-sacrifice, at all times, and at some times it has all the conditions which the Apostle mentions. It is a life of the service of souls under all the evils and miseries that can befall them, ignorance, error, delusion, slavery to sin and passion, and the numberless difficulties and failures which accompany the attempt to rise after a fall, or to maintain innocence, or to reach perfection. There is no work in the whole of creation so difficult, so important, so beset with dangers, so arduous, so unrelenting, and so noble in its rewards. It is truly the 'work of reconciliation,' which was begun by our Lord. No doubt, externally, the Church has her vicissitudes, and, the world having professedly become Christian, it has in a certain sense enthroned the Church, and she could not be enthroned without her ministers. But by no one at any time can the work be carried on rightly, unless it be as a service to souls, or unless it be consciously and deliberately the sacrifice of every human consideration to that service. It can be supported by nothing but the example of Him Who said, 'Lo I among you as He that serveth,' an example which involves the duty of following to the utmost Him Who said, 'The Good Shepherd giveth His Life for the sheep.'

Our Lord's Heart was full of all the fervour and self-devotion which glowed in the breasts of the Apostles and their followers in all ages of the Church, and a thousandfold more. Yet He had, as we might say, to content Himself with a few words on these great subjects, and to speak of His own great sacrifice in terms which hardly convey more than a hint of what it was. 'He that is greatest among you, shall be your servant;' and then He added His

favourite generalization, 'and whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled, and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.' And then, turning back, as it seems to the subject directly before His mind, the judicial sentence on the Scribes and Pharisees, that is, the priests and teachers who were in possession of the chair of Moses, He proceeds calmly and strongly to denounce them for their unfaithfulness, which had brought the holy nation to the verge of ruin, and threatened to defeat, if that could have been defeated, the good counsel of God for the Redemption of the world. The woes which He denounces upon them are eight in number, and the sins for which they are proclaimed various in the degrees of their enormity. The first and most fatal of all the charges made against them is the neglect of the duty for the discharge of which they had inherited the great position which they filled. 'Wo to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut the Kingdom of Heaven against men, for you yourselves do not enter in, and those that are going in, you suffer not to enter.'

These words constitute the gravest possible condemnation that could be passed upon the class to whom our Lord spoke. They are rather more general and extensive in their meaning than the other words which He had used of the scribes or lawyers upon a former occasion,¹⁴ for He then had spoken of the 'Key of Knowledge,' which they had taken away. 'You yourselves have not entered in, and those that were entering in, you have hindered.' There our Lord speaks generally of the Kingdom of Heaven. The Kingdom of Heaven had always been presented to the Jews as the great future blessing of

¹⁴ St. Luke xi. ; *Story of the Gospels*, § 104.

their nation. It had been foretold and described by the prophets, and it had been foreshadowed by a continual succession of types, the Temple services and the whole ceremonial Law witnessed to it, the natural conscience itself instinctively yearned for it, the time and place of its coming had been pointed out, and, as if this and all beside that had been done to recommend it to them had been nothing, St. John the Baptist had been sent, in fulfilment of the prophecies, before our Lord's Face to announce His coming. And then our Lord had Himself come, attested by the voice of the Father from Heaven, and by hundreds of miracles of the most marvellous mercy wrought before their eyes.

What was it that was wanting to make the people of Judæa and Galilee accept it? No doubt there were dull and stubborn hearts, wedded to the things of sense and of the world that recoiled from it. But there was much goodwill and humility among the people, as had been shown by the great success of the preaching of repentance by St. John. But one thing was wanting. There was this class of men who sat in the chair of Moses, and to whom the people naturally looked upon as their religious guides. The one thing wanting was that this class, who spoke and taught in the name of God, should accept the new Kingdom and give the sanction of the Synagogue to the new teaching. What did they do? They hung back at first, they sneered and criticised next, they then slandered and calumniated our Lord, excommunicated His followers, and were soon to deliver Him to the Romans to be crucified. The people naturally looked to them as their guides. The feelings of reverence for authority, of humility, of faithfulness to the system in which they had been

brought up, which ought to have been turned powerfully on the side of the new Kingdom, which was in truth the legitimate outcome of the religious system of their fathers, were all turned against it. It was turning God against Himself.

This was the first crime of these Pharisees and Priests which made them the enemies of God's scheme for the regeneration of the world. And now that the time had come for the consummation of their wickedness in the Passion, our Lord deals forth in simple and solemn words the doom they had brought on themselves, and the grounds of the sentence. 'You shut the Kingdom of Heaven against men, for you yourselves do not enter in, and those that are going in, you suffer not to enter. For men in such positions can do this great mischief. Their position gives them a fearful power over souls, all the more in a case like theirs, when the influence of persons was so great. The people were in our Lord's eyes 'as sheep without a shepherd,' and sheep need some one to guide them, and guard them, and help them to find pasture. It was harm enough, therefore, for the scribes and priests to stand aloof and leave the people to themselves. This was the complaint made against the shepherds of Israel by the prophet.¹⁵ They had not strengthened the weak, and they had not healed those that were sick, and they had not bound up that which was broken, and they had not brought back that which was driven away, nor sought that which was lost. But they had done worse than neglect their duties, they had used their power against the truth. They had not only not entered themselves, but when the people were ready and eager to enter in, they had shut the door and

¹⁵ Ezech. xxxiv.

prevented them. Those that did enter, had to enter in spite of them.

‘Wo to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you devour the houses of widows, praying long prayers. For this you shall receive greater judgment. Wo to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you go round about the land and the sea to make one proselyte, and when he is made, you make him the child of Hell twofold more than yourselves.’ Something has already been said as to the first of these two charges. The fact on which the second is founded seems to have been that the Pharisees, from the same motive of avarice, were very jealous in persuading Gentiles, especially of influence, to become proselytes, but without teaching them any of the more spiritual parts of the Jewish religion. They were themselves entirely external in their religion, and therefore could not communicate the interior spirit of piety and purity of heart which was the true kernel of Judaism. We find allusions to the proselytizing spirit of some of the Jews, both in Josephus and in the classics, as in Horace and Juvenal. They were looked down upon among the Jews themselves. The good heathen mentioned in the New Testament, as the centurion at Capharnaum, Cornelius, and others, do not seem to have been formally proselytes, although they worshipped the one God and observed the moral precepts of the Law. The proselytes, properly so-called, were circumcised, and bound to the Law of Moses, and it is very natural that such persons, in our Lord’s time, would be taught to be greater sticklers for every petty observance than the Jews themselves.

‘Wo to you, blind guides, that say, whosoever

shall swear by the Temple, it is nothing, but he that shall swear by the gold of the Temple, is a debtor'—that is, he is bound by his oath. 'Ye foolish and blind! for whether is greater, the gold, or the Temple that sanctifieth the gold? And whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing, but whosoever shall swear by the gift that is on it, is a debtor. Ye blind! for whether is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? He therefore that sweareth by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things that are upon it. And whosoever shall swear by the Temple, sweareth by it, and by Him that dwelleth in it. And he that sweareth by Heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by Him that sitteth thereon.' This charge refers to a doctrine among the Pharisees which may not be perfectly clear to us in all its details, but the general import of which is not hard to catch. The doctrine consisted in a distinction between oaths according to the objects which were appealed to as the sanction of these oaths, and it amounted to this, that there was a difference between these objects—of which common people were not aware—in consequence of which difference an oath by some was binding, and by others was not. The imagined difference enabled the Pharisees to teach their disciples to disregard certain oaths and only to observe others.

The distinction, in the cases before us, seems to be that between what is directly and at the time offered to God, and what is not, but only generally consecrated to Him. Thus when a man made an offering of treasure, gold, or money, to God, it was offered directly to Him, and so an oath by the offering was binding. And when any gift was laid on the altar as an offering, it was directly an oblation to God by

the person who made it, and so an oath by it was binding. It was not the case with the altar itself on which the gift was laid, or the Temple itself on which the gold or treasure was offered, and, in consequence, it was said there was no binding force in an oath so made. Our Lord sweeps away all these distinctions, which were mere traps to the conscience, and which enabled some of the Jews to perjure themselves and get a reputation for their nation as being unobservant of their oaths. Our Lord's teaching is that all these oaths were equally binding, whether by the gold or the Temple, by the gift or by the altar. The doctrine was, moreover, absurd, for in the cases given it was clear that the altar sanctified the gift, and the Temple sanctified the gold, that is, the gift and the gold could not have been considered as consecrated, but for having been laid on the altar or offered in the Temple. He gives another instance of this doctrine, the swearing by Heaven, as if it had been taught by the Pharisees that an oath 'by Heaven' was invalid, apparently because they made a distinction between created things and God, whereas an oath 'by Heaven' included a reference to God Who dwelleth therein, and so was an appeal to Him which must have all the force that can belong to any oath.

'Wo to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you tithe mint, and anise, and cummin, and have left the weightier things of the Law, judgment, and mercy, and faith. These things you ought to have done, and not leave those undone. Blind guides! who strain out a gnat, and swallow a camel.' The charge here is very easily understood. The Pharisees taught with excessive minuteness of detail, the duty of giving tithes even of the smallest

kinds of produce, a strictness of observance which appears to have been of later introduction, but which our Lord does not object to in itself. But at the same time they forgot that their own teaching was lax as to the observation of the weightier matters of the Law. Our Lord seems to have had in His mind the passage in the Prophet Micheas: 'What shall I offer to the Lord that is worthy? Wherewith shall I kneel before the High God? Shall I offer holocausts to Him, and calves of a year old? May the Lord be appeased with thousands of rams and many thousands of he goats? . . . I will show thee, O man, what is good, and what the Lord requireth of thee, verily to do judgment, and to love mercy, and to walk solicitous with thy God.'¹⁶ The word which is translated in our text 'faith' seems to include faithfulness in all obligations of the Divine Law.

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'Wo to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you make clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but within you are full of rapine and uncleanness. Thou blind Pharisee! first make clean the inside of the cup and the dish, that the outside may become clean.' The reasons for these careful observances of the strict Jews are mentioned in a former place. Our Lord does not blame them, any more than He blames the customs mentioned in the last charge of scrupulous tithe-giving. But the charge is the neglect of more important interior duties which accompanied this strict observance, as if the observance made up for the neglect.¹⁷

The words 'full of rapine and uncleanness,' have

¹⁶ Micheas vi. 6—8.

¹⁷ See St. Luke ix. and the *Preaching of the Cross*, part ii. (*Public Life*, vol. x.), p. 46.

suggested to some that our Lord may have meant to hint at the rapaciousness and immorality of the Pharisees—as if He had meant to hint that it was by extortion and uncleanness of life that their cups and platters were so full. It is likely, at least, that the last words of the paragraph, ‘that the outside may become clean,’ convey the idea that if the inner life is pure, the exterior will soon be provided for as far as is necessary.

‘Wo to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you are like to whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear to men beautiful, but within are full of dead men’s bones, and of all filthiness. So you also outwardly indeed appear to men just, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.’ These words present another side of an image which our Lord had already used in the parallel passage in St. Luke,¹⁸ on an earlier occasion. The law was that to touch a grave was to incur ceremonial pollution. In consequence of this law, it was a custom to wash the graves with whitewash, so they might be easily discerned, and no one might touch them without knowing it. The words in the text refer to this custom. The Pharisees appeared outwardly just, and were all the time impure within, and they did not aim at more than an external appearance of justice. In the passage of St. Luke there is nothing about the sepulchres being whitened. It is only said that the lawyers are like sepulchres which appear not, and men walk over them, and are consequently defiled without knowing it. What is best of all is neither to be impure within, nor to appear so. These Pharisees were content with the last without the first. Men might avoid the cere-

¹⁸ St. Luke xi. 44.

monial defilement of coming in contact with impurity by the fact of the sepulchres being whitened so as to be avoided easily. But in the moral world, the contact with what is impure, even though there is no warning, may be as defiling and as corrupting as when there is. It is impossible to touch pitch without defilement, the proverb tells us. And so the Pharisees insensibly communicated their worldliness, their sensuality, their disregard for true sanctity, and other faults, without giving their neighbours the opportunity of guarding themselves against their influence, which would have been furnished if their true character had been known.

‘Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! that build the sepulchres of the prophets, and adorn the monuments of the just, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. . . . Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers! Ye serpents, generation of vipers, how will you flee from the judgment of Hell? Therefore, behold I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes, and some of them you will put to death and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city. That upon you may come all the just blood that hath been shed upon the earth, from the blood of Abel the just, even unto the blood of Zacharias the son of Barachias, whom you killed between the temple and the altar. Amen, I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation!’

These words are repeated from a former discourse of our Lord, though in a more solemn way, as the occasion required. For it was not the same thing to denounce the judgments of God to some Pharisees

and Scribes resident, as it seems, in the country parts of Judæa, and to proclaim that the same judgments were imminent in the Temple of Jerusalem itself in the week of the great Paschal solemnity. They belong, we may say, properly to this occasion in their fulness, and they are anticipations in the other place in which they occur. Our Lord, in the first place, speaks more fully here than before. Before He had said, 'Wo to you, who build the monuments of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. Truly you bear witness that you consent unto the doings of your fathers, for they indeed killed the prophets, and you build their sepulchres.' Here He says that 'they build the sepulchres of the prophets, and adorn the monuments of the just, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore you are witnesses against yourselves, that you are the sons of them that killed the prophets.'

These words of our Lord seem to imply that although they were not conscious of their hypocrisy in disclaiming the evil deeds of their fathers, in any case they acknowledged that they were the descendants of the murderers, and as such, were liable to suffer the chastisements of Providence for the murder. For, as has been said before, the blood of the prophets 'cried from the ground' against the descendants of those who killed them. It was further true that they were their descendants in spirit, as was shown by the persecution of our Lord and the persecution which was to follow of the Apostles and of Christians to the very end of the history of Judaism as a nation. Our Lord foresaw this, and He saw in their treatment of Himself the

very spirit which had led their fathers to slay the prophets. This is what is meant in the earlier passage in St. Luke by their being said to 'consent unto the deeds of their fathers.' They were witnesses against themselves, for they were doing the very same things which they professed to expiate and atone for by building the monuments of the prophets.

'Fill up then the measure of your fathers.' Something has already been said of the meaning of this expression. Their fathers had inherited an accumulation of guilt for blood, and had added to that accumulation. The debt had gone on increasing, and that generation was to add to it the final and crushing weight of the persecution and murder of our Lord, and of the Apostles and first Christian teachers. The measure was thus to be filled up, so that God's justice could bear no more, and the punishment was to fall on them, not only of their own extreme wickedness, but of all the wickedness of that kind of preceding generations. For God deals with nations as wholes. Their lives stretch through a series of generations, according to the appointment of Providence, and the national sins committed by each generation are punished in that one of the series which it suits the order of that Providence to select for the chastisement. For God has appointed, to nations and empires and families, what St. Paul in his speech at Athens calls 'the times and limits of their habitation,'¹⁹ and it sometimes suits Him not to punish the guilt at once, but to defer the inevitable chastisement to a later time. The Old Testament history is full of examples of this. Then, when the time comes and the 'measure' of iniquity which He has determined to tolerate in a people or empire or

¹⁹ Acts xvii. 26.

family before destroying it, is filled up, the judgment falls.

The Jews, and particularly the generation of the Jews to whom our Lord was sent, had unexampled opportunities vouchsafed to them in the whole course of their history, and in the particular period which closed that history, both of profiting by God's favours and of outraging them by the blackest ingratitude and most fearful crimes. No generation of men had ever such an opportunity as came to them in the offer of salvation through our Lord, and in the liberty which was allowed them of bringing about His murder. The measure could not have been more completely filled up. The coming of our Lord, however, did not exhaust God's mercies to them, for they had beside that the mission to them of the Apostles and of the first Church. 'Therefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes'—He uses the language of the Old Testament in speaking of His own messengers to the people—'and some of them you will put to death and crucify'—as St. Stephen, St. James, and St. Simeon—'and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues'—as is said of the Apostles in the Acts, and as was true of many others—'and persecute from city to city, that upon you may come all the just blood that hath been shed upon the earth.' That is, the punishment which is due to the justice of God for all the accumulated murders of God's servants will fall on you, and is here spoken of as being the object of the mission to you of those who have just been named, because the historical result will be that you will bring down on yourselves that punishment by your treatment of those who are sent to you. Our Lord remains silent as to the crowning crime of all, the

murder of Himself, which He has already sufficiently signified in the parables which He had lately delivered.

He then specifies what is meant by the accumulation of blood. 'From the blood of Abel the just, even unto the blood of Zacharias the son of Barachias, whom you killed between the temple and the altar.' The difficulty about the name as given in the text is well known. At the end of the Hebrew canon of Scripture is placed the second Book of Paralipomenon, in which²⁰ we have the account of the murder of Zacharias 'the son of Joiada' in the place mentioned by our Lord, and at the command of the king, for upbraiding the people because they had forsaken their God. It was, therefore, a formally national crime, and it stands at the end of their history in their sacred books. Moreover, it is added in the history that as he died, Zacharias said, 'The Lord see and require it.' The only difficulty is as to the name given to his father in the Book of Paralipomenon, and the wrong name is thought by some either to be an interpolation in the text, or to be an intentional change of word, using the word son for grandson, because Joiada²¹ had been the means of restoring Joas the King, and overthrowing the usurpation of Athalia. 'King Joas did not remember the kindness that Joiada, his father, had done to him, but killed his son. In this case Barachias may have been actually the name of the father of Zacharias, who was murdered, but may have been left out on purpose, in order that the more famous name of

²⁰ 2 Paralip. xxiv. 21, 22.

²¹ Jehoiada is mentioned as having been one hundred and thirty years old when he died.

Joiada might be connected with the murder of Zacharias by the ungrateful king.²²

Our Lord concludes His discourse by apostrophizing the city, as representing the Jewish Church, in words which are in considerable contrast to the language He had been using to the Scribes and Pharisees. They represented to Him a generation of men, the successors of many former generations, who had been entrusted with the highest commission which the Providence of God had ever placed in the hands of men up to that time, who had been unfaithful to their trust and had ended by outraging Him in a manner which was only to be exceeded in ingratitude by what was yet to come. He spoke to them as their Judge. But Jerusalem represented to Him the whole loving counsel of God towards the nation whom He had chosen, and the prominent thought which runs through His words is one of

²² The Jewish historian, Josephus (*Jewish War*, iv. 5, § 4), tells a curious story of a good man, Zacharias, the son of Baruch, who was slain by the Zealots in the Temple just before the siege of Jerusalem. He had been accused of sending messengers to Vespasian, and of wishing to submit to the Romans. The judges before whom he was accused acquitted him, although he not only defended himself, but upbraided his accusers strongly and exposed their violent and illegal proceedings. He was a man much respected and very wealthy. The Zealots assassinated him in the Temple after his acquittal. It has been thought by some writers that our Lord may have spoken prophetically of this murder, which was to take place at the end of the history of the nation. It would certainly not be impossible that He might use the language as of history in a prophecy, as is often the case with the Old Testament prophets. Nor is the fact, that early Christian writers never fastened on this explanation, sufficient to make it untenable, for those writers seem to have little acquaintance with the writings of Josephus. But the murder which is mentioned in the Book of Paralipomenon seems likely to have been in the minds of the Jews as the last instance recorded of such a crime, although many of the prophets who were persecuted and murdered were of a later date in the history, and this murder seems to have been commonly accepted in the Church as the particular crime of which our Lord spoke.

compassionate and regretful love. 'Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee! how often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather together her chicken under her wings, and thou wouldest not! Behold your house shall be left desolate. For I say unto you, you shall not see Me henceforth till you say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.'

Our Lord seems in these words to speak, in His Divine Person, not only of His own repeated attempts to convert the inhabitants of the Holy City, coming to it time after time in the course of His Ministry, but also of the providential efforts made by God to correct and convert the people during all the centuries of the Jewish history. Jerusalem was the city of His delight, the home of His Temple in which the sacrifice was continually offered, the centre of the true religion to all the world. There was never any city so favoured by God, and He had borne with its inhabitants with unexampled forbearance and mercy. After its sins had made it necessary for His justice to destroy it and demolish the first Temple, it had been marvellously restored and made again the place 'where His honour dwelleth.' After all its wickedness He had not cast it off. And then, when He came in the Flesh, the Gospel history witnesses to His unceasing efforts to save it. It was out of tenderness for it that He had not made it the chief scene of His Preaching. The temper of its inhabitants was such, in their pride and worldliness and impiety, that if He had shown Himself there more often, the final catastrophe of the Passion might have been hastened on before the time.

He had wept over it when He was about to enter

it in triumph a few days before, speaking a few most touching words of the day of visitation which had been allowed to pass unheeded. It had still deserved, and was to deserve more completely, the epithet, 'Thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee!' Now He thinks over all His efforts which had been made in vain. 'How often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather together her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldest not!' The language might have been far more severe, for, in truth, the Jerusalem to which He spoke was not the material city or the religious ordinances and blessings which had been connected therewith, but the generation of men whose unfaithfulness and ingratitude He had been denouncing. The living and active Jerusalem before Him, were the Chief Priests, the Scribes and Pharisees, the fickle people. It was more true to say that they would not be gathered under His wings, as the chickens under those of their mother. They had treated Him as if He had been some evil bird of prey instead. And the extreme sentence which He passes on the city is that their house shall be left to them desolate. It is emptiness, not ruin—the abandonment by God. That is the severest part of the hardest sentence which can fall on any of His creatures, and, as has been said, even this, in the case before us, is tempered by a strain of hope in the end.

'For I say unto you, you shall not see Me henceforth till you say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.' The time had been foretold by one of the latest of the prophets. 'I will pour out upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of prayer, and they

shall look on Him Whom they have pierced.'²³ The mystery of the temporary rejection of the Jews and the conversion of the Gentiles is spoken of in glowing language by St. Paul, as a mystery hidden in former ages, and only brought to light in his own days, and he tells us, in the portion of his Epistle to the Romans which deals with this great subject, that the rejection of God's chosen people is to have its end. 'I say when have they so stumbled that they should fall? God forbid! But by their offence, salvation is come to the Gentiles, that they may be emulous of them. Now if the offence (stumbling) of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more the fulness of them? . . . For if the loss of them be the reconciliation of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? . . . For I would not have you ignorant, brethren, of the mystery—that blindness in part has happened in Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles should come in. And so all Israel should be saved, as it is written: There shall come out of Sion, He that shall deliver, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob. And this is to them My covenant, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the Gospel, indeed, they are enemies for your sake, but as touching the election, they are most dear for the sake of the fathers, for the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance.'²⁴

What was a hidden mystery to angels and men before the days of St. Paul, was perfectly clear and open to the mind of our Blessed Lord. And equally clear and open to His mind was all that has happened since the reprobation of the Jews and the election of

²³ Zach. xii. 10.²⁴ Rom. xi. 11, 12, 15, 25, 29.

the Gentiles, and all that shall happen until the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled, as well as all that shall take place in the conversion, as far as it is to be, of the chosen people to their God. It is lawful, therefore, to consider that His Sacred Heart may have dwelt with satisfaction and consolation on the prospect of the far future, while He was pronouncing the sentence on that beloved city in the solemn and tender words which did not shut out all hope for its ultimate restoration to the favour of God. The words which He quoted had been used by the multitudes but a few days before. Their echoes had died away, and the voices which were soon to reach His ears were to call for His Crucifixion, and to pray that His Blood might be on them and on their children. His Divine love could turn the imprecation of a curse, for the shedding of innocent blood, into an unconscious prayer for a share in the redemption which that Blood was to purchase by the ineffable merits of the Sacrifice on the Cross. He could foresee the time when the nation which then shouted, 'Away with Him, away with Him,' would join in the acclamations of the whole world of believers, 'Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord.'

CHAPTER XII.

Our Lord leaving the Temple.

St. Mark xii. 41—44 ; St. Luke xxi. 1—4 ; St. John xii. 37—50 ;
Story of the Gospels, §§ 142, 143.

THE denunciation of the Scribes and the Pharisees, ending with the solemn farewell taken by our Lord of Jerusalem and the Temple, seems to have closed His direct teaching in that holy place. St. Luke, indeed, who, as well as St. Mark, omits the severe discourse against the priests, speaks in general words of our Lord's teaching in the Temple, summing up the whole in a passage of his Gospel somewhat later than this. But it is natural to regard his words as a general description of the week before the Last Supper, and not as implying that everything which he mentions before those words happened in the Temple itself. 'In the daytime He was teaching in the Temple, but at night He abode in the mount that is called Olivet, and all the people came early in the morning to the Temple to hear Him.' This was the ordinary course of things during those days, and St. Luke need not be understood as implying that the verses which immediately precede this passage, which speak of our Lord's prediction to His disciples concerning the end of the world, are to be understood as relating what passed before our Lord left the Temple for the last time. St. Luke is comparatively short in his account of the discourse on the Mount

of Olives, which fills so large a space in St. Matthew, who adds a large amount of teaching, which is partly prophetic also.

It might have been expected that our Lord, after the denunciation of the Chief Priests, would hurry away from the Temple. But it does not seem certain that it was so. All through the week He bore Himself with great calm and majesty, and generally His language was judicial and severe. And although it is not quite certain at what point of time we are to fix the anecdote of the poor widow, whose offering to the treasury attracted His remark, it may very possibly have happened after the discourse on which we have had to dwell in the last chapter, and before He proceeded with His disciples to the Mount of Olives. Thus it may be classed with another incident which we shall also place here, as it seems naturally to belong to the close of His teaching in the Temple. We will first speak of this anecdote of the poor widow and her offering.

‘And Jesus sitting over against the treasury, looking on He saw how the rich men cast their gifts into the treasury.’ The treasury was in a well-known spot, where He had taught before, and perhaps the crowd of those who were making their offerings was greater than usual, on account of the near approach of the coming feast. ‘Many that were rich cast in much.’ It appears then that it could be seen what each one offered, and thus it was an occasion for ostentatious as well as for simple devotion. ‘And He also saw a certain poor widow, and she cast in two brass mites which make a farthing. And calling together His disciples, He saith to them, Verily I say to you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all that have cast into the treasury.’

For all them have of their abundance cast into the offerings of God, but she of her want cast in all that she had, even her whole living.'

Christian contemplation naturally fastens on this beautiful incident, which sets our Lord before us as the reader of hearts, and as weighing in the balance every action that we do, not only the acts of devotion, or the works of charity, or our offerings in the service which we present to Him, but all other works and thoughts whatsoever. His time for speaking and teaching publicly is over, at least in the Temple. But He sits over against the treasury and watches everything that is poured into it by thousands of offerers. Perhaps among these Scribes and Pharisees whom He had been denouncing, there were some coming and distinguishing themselves by the magnificence of their gifts. Our Lord could see, as clearly as He saw the heart of the poor widow, the hearts also of these men, and He could have exposed, perhaps, much of hypocrisy in their gifts, many at least imperfect motives, love of applause, or ambition, that they might reap some advantage from the good which men thought of them.

But nothing of all this hypocrisy or ambition did He choose to expose. And it was the same all through His life. He knew what was in man, St. John tells us, and He came in contact with some of the most wretched hypocrites that ever existed, but He never spoke of them, except in general. Even when He had denounced them so vehemently that morning in the Temple, He had spoken of them only as a class. He came not to judge but to save, and so it was in keeping with His mission that He should forbear to reveal the

secrets, which if declared, might lower men in the eyes of those around them, while He could let His Sacred Heart indulge itself by drawing attention to the action of this poor widow. The widow's gift was to live on for ever on His Gospel and in the Church, the foundation of a thousand daily deeds of pure charity, true devotion, heroic hope and confidence in Providence. So He spoke of the one hidden action that surpassed in true devotion that of all the other offerers, and left unnoticed the lavish magnificence, as well as the ostentation and ambition, of scores of others. The person, or at least her condition as a widow, seems to have been known. If our Lord brought her deed into light, it may have been that He wished us to gain the instruction which is contained in her example, as when He made the Hæmorrhissa reveal what had been done in her. Or perhaps some standers-by may have been inclined to sneer at her or ridicule her, which would add another reason for our Lord to praise her.

It may be remarked that our Lord did not simply say that the widow had given, in point of merit, more than all the others, but more absolutely, and the reason He assigns for this seems to be that it is a greater gift to give to God—'unto the offerings of God'—out of poverty than out of abundance, and to give all that she had to give than to give a part. There are therefore two circumstances to be considered in gifts that are made to God, the riches or the poverty of the giver, and the totality or partial character of the gift. For these things must certainly influence the love and faith with which the gift is made, and this must also bring down on the giver a greater or less amount of blessing in the form of merit and reward. David would not give to

God that which cost him nothing, and it is the same spirit that made the widow unwilling to give less than all she had to give. We expect the gifts of generous persons to have a greater blessing on them than those of others, and thus it may be that such gifts are actually more valuable in their issue even according to the measure of the world, because they are gifted with greater fecundity, and are prospered more by the good Providence of God, Who loves the cheerful giver.

Our Lord may well have been thinking of His Church at the time when He was sitting over against the treasury. It may have been a consolation to the Sacred Heart to dwell on the thoughts which may have been suggested by the offering of the widow. The Temple which He was about to leave for ever, and which was so magnificent to outward sight, was doomed to destruction in a few years, and shortly after this moment He was to be telling His disciples that there should be left of it a stone upon a stone which should not be overthrown. But all its magnificence was but a poor representation of the splendours of the Church which was to succeed to the Synagogue, and of which the Apostles, whom He gathered round Him to hear His words about the widow, were to be the founders after Him, and the precious stones and chief ornaments. The Church of our Lord was to be founded on the poor, and was to be built up upon the sanctity, the labours, and the offerings of the poor, and it may have rejoiced His Heart to see before His eyes just at that time an act which reminded Him of what was to be in the Church. We have said the gift of the widow has, as it were, two sides, because it was a gift out of poverty, and it was not only a poor gift, but a total

gift, it was all that she had to give. Each of these aspects may be considered by itself.

The history of the Church is full of the power and value of the gifts of the poor, and we may learn from God's dealings in her the truth of our Lord's words, not only in a comparative sense, but absolutely and positively, when He said that this widow had cast into the offerings of God more than they all. He speaks of the offerings or the gifts of God, and the words seem to imply that He refers to the value which God attaches to them, whatever men may think of them. He does not use any qualifying clause, saying that her gift was more in proportion, which was true indeed, but absolutely more than those of all the others, because when it reached the footstool of God, it reached it clothed in all the faith, and confidence, and devotion, and self-sacrifice, and intelligence of His way and tastes, if we may use the expression, which accompanied it from the heart of the poor widow, and in which it was superior to the gifts, however numerous and costly, of the other offerers. It weighed them down in the balance of Heaven, as some perfect act of love or contrition from a penitent heart weighs down in the balance a multitude of long prayers and mortifications from imperfect and lukewarm souls. It was more than all the other offerings in its acceptance with God, it was more than all in the blessings which it brought back in return on the heart from which it came, in the increase of joy and confidence which rewarded it from God, in the fruitfulness of the good it did, even materially, in the benediction which was upon it and passed on to the work for which it was given, and it was especially blessed in this, that it was made in the Providence of God so rich in the fertility of the

example which it set, and the devotion of which it became the pattern in the hearts of the faithful.

It was a habit of the Apostles to catch up the hints which our Lord had, as it were, dropped almost as it seemed by the way, to cherish them in their hearts, and make them fruitful in their lives and their teaching. This hint about the mites of the widow seems to have sprung into life under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, in the infant Church of Jerusalem, and there we find almost at once the faithful giving up their property, and laying it at the feet of the Apostles. It became a rule to give all, as we see in the history of the punishment of Ananias and Sapphira, which makes it clear that the offering they had made implied a profession of religious poverty. Later on in the history, the Church of Jerusalem fell under persecution and into great poverty, and the Apostles took the occasion to suggest to the newly converted Gentile Christians to send collections of alms to their suffering brethren in Judæa, and we hear a great deal about this in the Acts and the Epistles. St. Paul seems as if he could hardly contain himself about the charity in this way of the Churches of Macedonia, the Philippians, the Thessalonians, and the rest. They had themselves been under severe persecution, and yet they found means, poor as they were, for there were few rich among them, to help their brethren. He tells the Corinthians, who were themselves rich, that 'in much tribulation they have had abundance of joy, and their very deep poverty hath abounded unto the riches of their simplicity, for, according to their power, I bear them witness and beyond their power they were willing.' He says that they asked to be allowed to take part before he applied to them,

‘With much intreaty begging of us the grace and communication of the ministry that is done toward the saints, and not as we hoped, but they gave their own selves first to the Lord, then to us by the will of God, insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would finish in you this grace.’¹

This is a specimen of the commendations which he bestows upon the Macedonian Churches, themselves poor and had suffered much, and we see how he desires the instinct of liberality to spread from them to others by the language he uses to the Corinthians, ‘This I say, He who soweth sparingly shall also reap sparingly, but he who soweth in blessing shall also reap blessings. Every one as he had determined in his heart, not with sadness or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound in you, that you always having sufficiency in all things, should abound to every good work.’ And in the verses that follow he notes a number of things that are so pleasing to God in their almsgiving—first, their own bountifulness, secondly, the thanksgiving it calls forth from the saints, by whom he means the afflicted Churches of Judæa, whose wants are not only assisted, but whose gratitude is most delightful to God, then the obedience to the Gospel teaching which the almsgiving evidences, then the proof it gives of their brotherly love to the Jewish Christians, which calls forth on the other hand the charity of the Jewish Christians towards them, and a great amount of prayer one for another. All these things the Apostle speaks of in a few words as his reasons for rejoicing in the large liberality in giving which he is seeking to provoke in the Corinthians on this occasion.

¹ 2 Cor. viii.

We know how our Lord loved the poor, whose lot in life He chose for Himself and for His Blessed Mother, and it would have been unlike Him if He had let the opportunity pass of showing with what power and fecundity He was to endow in His Kingdom the alms and the labours of those whom He loved so tenderly. The greatest works in His Church have always been done by poor men, and it is almost a condition of great and good works that they should spring from and be fostered in poverty, though He sometimes uses the rich also for such enterprises, but the rich who are in their hearts poor for His sake. But this principle in the Church might have lacked some of its consecration in His own words and His own benediction, if He had not blessed the offering of the poor widow on this occasion.

In the second way the offering of the widow was greater. She gave all she had, and, to make such a sacrifice implied an amount of faith and confidence and spiritual discernment, which raised her above the ordinary level of pious persons. It must have been a holy instinct of spiritual discernment which guided her. Some might have said that her offering was worth nothing, and could well therefore be spared. She must have seen that it was most precious in the sight of God, Who has no need of treasures, and to Whom the offerings of the faithful are pleasant because they witness to their faith and charity, and because they have been endowed by Him with wonderful power as satisfactions for sin, impetrations of blessings, and as conditions of spiritual advancement. She must therefore have understood that her slender means did not preclude her from being among the offerers, and from sharing in the great reward of those who

contribute directly to the honour of God. She must have it seriously, not recklessly, understanding what it was in God's sight. A faith like this implies an enlightened intelligence as to the ways and thoughts of God, with which only His friends can be familiar. It implies, moreover, an intelligence as to the reward which He was likely to mete out to her offering, although that was probably made more out of love and devotion, and a desire to contribute to His honour. We know how our Lord had blessed the action of Magdalene, in anointing Him, saying, 'What she had, she has done,' and He made the offering of the widow now before us as famous as that of His dearly-cherished friend, for like the action of Magdalene, wheresoever the Gospel is preached in the whole world, that also which she hath done is told as a memorial of her. So much is there of magnificence about her oblation when it is rightly understood.

We have said something of the reward which it was likely that our Lord in His Providence gave to the action of the widow. We are not told how she was materially repaid, but there have been hundreds of cases in which the saints and servants of God have found themselves in great straits with only a few pence, or even less, for their necessary sustenance, have been guided by the holy intelligence of His ways to give what they have, though it be their last resource, in charity or devotion, and have found their wants immediately relieved and their alms repaid a hundredfold. This is one of the secrets of those who know how to trust their Father Who is in Heaven. They make over their last farthing, as it were, to Him, and receive in return an abundance which supplies, and more, every need. Their gain

is far less in the material resources which are thus placed at their disposal, than in the joy of having such an assurance of the tender watchful care of their Father and the increase of confidence with which they learn to throw every care upon Him Who provides so lovingly for His children.

Again, it may suggest itself to our thoughts that the treasury of the Temple, into which the poor widow cast her two farthings, although it was indeed meant to aid the provisions for the service and worship of God, was now doomed to destruction on account of the evil behaviour towards Him of the custodians of the sanctuary. It had become displeasing to God, and the worship offered to Him there had been a shadow at the best of the Christian worship now to succeed it. It was to linger a few years and then to be done away with for ever. The veil of the Temple was to be rent in twain in a few days, at the moment of our Lord's Death. The sacrifices were soon to cease and the whole sacred fabric was to become a desolate ruin. Yet, nevertheless, the offerings which piety and religion might make at the shrine were accepted by God, and the worshippers and the offerers for the maintenance of the worship, imperfect as it was, were blessed and rewarded by Him. For God did not look to the ignorance or imperfect knowledge in which the oblations were made, but rather to the good intention and will for the service which they represented. And so the poor widow and the rest who shared her devotion went away after offering their gifts, with God's blessing upon them.

This anecdote of the poor widow may be said to follow up and complete the teaching conveyed in our Lord's words on that former occasion to which it

has been compared, of the offering of Magdalene. Then our Lord defended against cavil and criticism the generous munificence of persons who are led out of devotion to spend lavishly in His service, pouring out in one act of sacrifice what might doubtless have served for many acts of mercy. He would not have the act of worship and affection decried on the ground that it was not an act of useful mercy. Now our Lord carries on the teaching by placing the act of the widow on the same level, so to speak, as the act of Magdalene, as to the greatness of the sacrifice, though it does not share with that act in the intensity of personal devotion to Him. But both of them have 'done what they had,' what they could, and the act of Magdalene is not greater, so far, than that of the widow, because she has given all that she had, her whole substance. No one, therefore, however poor, is unable to make an offering, which can be compared to that of the glorious anointer of our Lord, because no one is unable to give all, however little that may be, and it is counted in the records of God, not according to the measure of earthly treasure, but according to the inestimable richness of the gift of a whole heart.

Another incident which belongs to the same interval while, as it seems, our Lord was yet lingering over the sacred precincts of the Temple, before dealing forth the last prophecies concerning its destruction, is contained in the words with which St. John closes this part of his Gospel, and turns to the narrative of His Last Supper and the Passion which followed it. He relates to us how our Lord Himself summed up His teaching to the Jews, and His own attitude concerning their treatment of Him. 'And whereas He had done so many miracles before them, they

believed not in Him, that the saying of Isaias might be fulfilled, which He said, Lord, who hath believed our hearing, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because Isaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, that they should not see with their eyes nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Isaias when he saw His glory and spoke of Him. However, many of the chief men also believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, that they might not be cast out of the Synagogue. For they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God.'

We have in this passage St. John adding his own testimony to that of the other Evangelists as to what we call the 'obscuration' and 'obduration' of the Jews. He quotes two passages from the Prophet Isaias. The first which he cites is from the famous fifty-third chapter, in which the details of the Passion of our Lord are dwelt upon, 'Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?' (In his quotation he follows the Septuagint version, in which the word 'Lord' is added at the beginning.) The other passage is from the sixth chapter of the prophecy, the passage which immediately follows the account of the glorious vision of Isaias when he saw 'the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and elevated, and His train filled the Temple. Upon it stood the Seraphim, the one had six wings, and the other had six wings, with two they covered his face, and with two they covered his feet, and with two they flew, and they cried one to another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God of Hosts, the earth is full of His glory. . . . And one of the Seraphim flew to

me, and in his hand was a live coal, which he had taken with the tongs off the altar. And he touched my mouth and said, Because this hath touched thy lips, thy iniquities shall be taken away, and thy sin shall be cleansed. And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send? and who shall go for us? And I said, Lo, here am I, send me. And He said, Go, and thou shalt say to this people, Hearing hear, and understand not, and see the vision, and know not. Blind the heart of this people, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and be converted, and I heal them.'

This text is quoted by our Lord Himself in His answer to the inquiries of the disciples when he first began to teach in parables.² It therefore has a kind of classical right, so to say, to be given as the explanation of the failure of His preaching to the people, especially as it is repeated here by St. John, and twice by St. Paul, once in the address to the Jews at Rome, with which the history of the Acts of the Apostles closes, and therefore in his last recorded utterance in the history of the New Testament, and once before, in his Epistle to the same Church,³ where he is speaking of the great question of the reprobation of the Jewish nation. It is not necessary here to explain at length all the slight discrepancies between the several quotations. The passage of Isaias, and the passage from the Psalms about 'the stone which the builders refused,' first quoted by our Lord at this time, must have been, as it appears, very frequently in the mouths of the first teachers of the Church.

² See St. Matt. xiii. 14; St. Mark iv. 12; St. Luke viii. 10.

³ Romans xi. 8.

Although the words are not exactly the same in all these quotations, the same sense is preserved in all, and perhaps the variety of language is meant to teach us the true meaning in all its extent⁴ and range. St. John speaks principally of His miracles, though our Lord had other evidences besides to which He appealed, and which must have been

⁴ The words of Cardinal Toletus, in *Joan.* c. xii., are worth quoting. 'I think,' he says, 'that this variation of the words was made by the good counsel of the Holy Ghost, that from one of the readings we might understand the sense of the other without error. St. Paul (Rom. xi.) teaches that it is God Who is now said to have blinded and hardened the Jews, when he quotes the same text in other words, keeping before him the sense, "As it is written, God hath given them a spirit of insensibility, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, unto this day." Then we see it is God of Whom Isaias speaks, "Blind the hearts of the people, and make their ears heavy," and St. John says, "He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart." For the prophet predicted what was to be in the future, although he used the form "Blind and harden," for he did not pray that the Jews might be blinded, but the blinding which he knew prophetically was to come he predicted in the form usual to the prophets. St. John altered the form of his language, saying, "He hath blinded and He hath hardened" that he might explain that it was not an imprecation on Isaias, but a prediction. But lest the words of St. John might give occasion of error to others, who might think that God was the cause of their being blinded and hardened, as if He had brought darkness on them, and had hardened the stiffness of their hearts, therefore St. Matthew and St. Paul have quoted the words differently, that we might understand how it is that God is said to have blinded and hardened them. "They have heard heavily with their ears, and their eyes they have closed." They are themselves, therefore, the cause of their blinding and hardening, because they have shut their eyes not wishing to receive the light of the truth, and have hardened their heart, hating Him Who was speaking the truth to them. When, therefore, Christ or God is said to blind men or to harden them, it is to be understood of the accidental result, because He has taught them the word of truth, and scattered abroad the light of faith, not at all in order that they might be blinded and hardened, but they, of their own malice, not wishing to receive the light and the word of Christ, are said to have been blinded thereby, when He intended nothing so little as that they might be blinded, as the Wise Man says (Wisdom ii.): "Their own malice blinded them." Their wills were averse to the reception of the truth and their intelligence also.'

meant to have their due weight. When He was questioned by the High Priests as to His authority, He answered them by appealing to the testimony of St. John the Baptist. But it may, perhaps, have been a part of His judicial silence with them to give the technical appointed proof in their case, and no more. If they had listened to St. John, they would have believed on our Lord, and then His miracles would have proved Him independently to be the messenger of God, and to speak in His name, and that was enough for faith.

It is remarkable that St. John, after quoting Isaias as in the places lately adduced, adds, 'These things said Isaias, when he saw His glory and spoke of Him.' The vision of Isaias was of the Divine Trinity. Although the Three Persons are not mentioned distinctly, yet that it was so, is indicated by the cries of the Seraphs, 'Holy, holy, holy,' and the Unity of the Godhead is indicated by the form of the vision. 'I saw the Lord sitting on His throne.' Certainly in this place St. John declares that Isaias saw the Eternal Son, and St. Paul in his last chapter of the Acts, says that the words here attributed by Isaias to God are the words of the Holy Ghost. The vision, therefore, must be thought in some ineffable manner to have represented the Ever-Blessed Godhead, one in Essence, three in Persons. And it is noted by some of the Fathers that St. John seems almost to go out of his way to declare that at the time of this vision Isaias saw His glory, and spoke of Him. It seems to be for the purpose of asserting our Blessed Lord's Divinity, wherein He is one with the Father and the Holy Ghost. It is one great purpose of his Gospel to bring out this truth prominently. It was especially well to speak of it at

this time, when St. John is dwelling on His rejection by the Jews, and to show that He was the very God Who had spoken of their blindness and hardness of heart by the prophet.

St. John adds a few verses which serve to qualify in some measure the general statement concerning our Lord's rejection. He tells us that though it was generally true that they did not believe Him, notwithstanding all His miracles, yet there were many men among the leaders of the nation who believed on Him, but had not the courage to profess their faith. We know, for instance, that Nicodemus was a secret disciple, Joseph of Arimathea was another, and St. John here implies that the class of which they are specimens was not altogether small. In truth, it may be said, that it must have been so, considering human nature as we know it. The appearance of our Lord, to the men of His generation, with His implied and expressed claim to our faith, had many features in common with that of a great teacher, whether an individual of remarkable virtue and power, or the Church, in our own times. However beautiful and attractive, however powerful and persuasive, however much accredited by miracles, however remarkable in fulfilling the anticipations of the human heart, the predictions of prophecy, ancient types and traditions, and the like, such a Person or such a Body is sure to jar upon a thousand prejudices and misconceptions, to alarm the comfortable satisfaction of those who were well at ease in the established religion, and to set before the dominant and well endowed religious teachers in possession the prospect that they must resign much that they hold peaceably, and accept, at least, a subordinate position where they now are prominent. None of these

'principal men' could think of confessing belief in Jesus Christ without an obvious sacrifice. The instinct of the Chief Priests and Pharisees as to the worldly danger to themselves was quite true, even apart from their political anticipations of a catastrophe to be brought on by collision with the power of Rome.

It was inevitable that these considerations should force themselves on the notice of men among the dominant classes of Judaism when it became a question of receiving our Lord as the Messias. It was the great advantage of the poor that they had little reason to attend to such considerations. God's grace was enough to make men like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea come forward nobly at the very time at which the followers of our Lord were all prostrate and scattered, as it was thought, and confess Him in the manner which was implied by His Burial. We see the force of the considerations on the other side by the fact that it was not till then that they came forward. After the Day of Pentecost, and the appointment of the deacons, we are told that 'a great multitude of the priests obeyed the faith.'⁵ Gamaliel, who before that time had advised the Sanhedrin to a policy of conciliation, became a Christian, and a saint and martyr later on, but at the time of his interference in favour of the Apostles, he may not have been so. There must have been many among the Pharisees at the same time who thought with him. It is evident, that with many the process of conversion was long and slow, as it is with hundreds of persons in the present day, like those of whom St. John speaks. It may have been then as it is now. With many the grace offered them

⁵ Acts vi. 7.

may have passed away, and they may have hardened into determined opponents of the rising Church. And, alas! there are often none more hardened or more bitter, than those who have been at one time prompted to knock at the gate of truth. But with many the patience and compassion of our Lord at last prevails, and though they may mourn over their long years of indecision, a way is found for them at last into the happy home of peace. For, of all the divine attributes His exercise of which, in His present dealings with men, is the subject of continual astonishment to the angels and saints in Heaven, there is none which stirs more deeply their intense wonder and thankfulness than His ineffable and adorable patience.

St. John puts the case of these men in his simple beautiful way. 'Many of the chief men also believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, that they might not be cast out of the Synagogue. For they loved the glory of men rather than the glory of God.' The meaning seems to be that they loved to be thought and spoken well of by men, rather than to have praise and glory in the sight of God by the sufferings which they might endure for Him. 'They might have had to suffer excommunication and other things perhaps worse or more painful, and from this they shrank back, unlike the Apostles, who after their scourging by the Sanhedrin, went from the presence of the Council rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus.'⁶ This was always the case, more or less, with the Church at Jerusalem to the very end. The Apostles took great pains to give as little offence to the

⁶ Acts v. 41.

prejudices of the Jews as possible, as we see by the manner in which St. Paul himself made an open profession of his observance of the ritual law at his last visit to Jerusalem.⁷ But he would not allow anything that looked like a compromise of the faith, as we see by the Epistle to the Hebrews. 'Let us go forth, therefore, to Him'—Jesus—'without the camp, bearing His reproach. For we have not been a lasting city, but we seek one that is to come.' After all, he seems to say, the sacrifice must be made. You may try to keep on good terms with your former friends, but your faith will not let you do so for ever. You belong to Him Who 'suffered outside the gate.'⁸

The plain words of St. John are enough to show how it was that many good men could let themselves for a time be frightened into compliance with the dominant prejudices of their class, the more easily, perhaps, as not more than a negative abstention of confessing our Lord was required of them. Their conduct is sufficiently blamed by the words which say that they loved the glory of men rather than the glory of God. There may have been many other motives which influenced their conduct, and that of others, for it would not have been impossible, as we see by experience, for some men to be intellectually convinced of the truth of our Lord's claims, and yet to have been kept back by motives of self-interest, ambition, or even of a lower grade. But St. John's words seem to contain the truth that even virtuous men, who are not under the sway of any lower

⁷ Acts xxi. 20.

⁸ Hebrews xiii. 11—13. This text seems written for men in our day who think they can be Catholics while remaining in a body separated from the Church.

passion, and who have no personal interests at stake, might be sufficiently debarred from the profession of disciples of our Lord by the love of human esteem which can work upon us in so many different ways.

The Evangelist subjoins some words of our Blessed Lord, in which He seems to sum up what He wishes us to understand concerning His rejection by the Jews, and especially the principal men among them. 'But Jesus cried, and said, He that believeth in Me, doth not believe in Me but in Him that sent Me, and He that seeth me, seeth Him that sent Me. I am come a light unto the world, that whosoever believeth in Me, may not remain in darkness. And if any man hear My words, and keep them not, I do not judge him. For I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that despiseth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him. The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of Myself, but the Father Who sent Me, He gave Me commandment what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting. The things therefore that I speak, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak.'

As these words are subjoined by St. John to a statement concerning the unbelief and the cowardice in confessing our Lord of so many who might have believed and confessed Him, they must be understood to have been spoken by our Lord with reference especially to the case of such men. He does not reproach them or upbraid them directly, but He states most plainly the truths which relate to their case, and which it behoves them to ponder. St. John says that He 'cried and said.' This seems to mean that He spoke openly and publicly, so that all might

know how He regarded the conduct of such men. To address them directly might have been contrary to His gentle prudence, and every one might know what He said, though no one in particular was addressed. The first part of our Lord's words puts before all men that His preaching was not His own, that is, it was not the word of a man, but of God. This increases the responsibility of those that hear Him, and of those that do not hear Him. It is not a man simply that some listen to and some do not. 'He that believeth in Me, doth not believe in Me, but in Him that sent Me.' The faith that rests on the word of man is human faith, the faith that rests on the word of God is divine faith. This might possibly have been said by a man sent by God; that is, one who had a right to speak in God's name, and whose mission was authenticated by God in some unmistakeable manner, might claim that to believe him was to believe in God. But not every messenger of God could add the further words, 'He that seeth Me, seeth Him that sent Me.' For this could not be true of a simple messenger, even the highest angel or the greatest prophet. It could only be said by the Incarnate God Himself. In our Lord the Divine Nature, which is the same identical Nature in the Three Divine Persons, was united to the Sacred Humanity by Personal Union. What was seen by the eye in our Lord was the Man Jesus Christ, but as we say we see a person, though it is only his body that meets the eye, so the Person Who was seen in our Lord, was the Divine Son in Whom there is the one essence of the Most High Godhead, which is one and the same in the Three Persons, and therefore we may say that the Father and the Holy Ghost was seen in our Lord, not

immediately, but mediately, through the Sacred Humanity. This, then, is what our Lord declares, that to hear Him was to hear the Father, to believe Him was to believe the Father, and consequently to confess Him was to confess the Father, to shrink from confessing Him was to shrink from confessing the Father, and to deny or despise Him was to deny or despise the Father.

This would be true in any case, and would be a reason for believing implicitly and gladly in any revelation made to us through such means, and it sets forth the blessing of faith, and the misery of unbelief in the clearest light. But what our Lord adds seems to add another consideration to the subject, for He tells us not only that He is consubstantial with the Father, but that the very object and purpose of the Incarnation was that He might be believed. If, for instance, He had said that He had come into the world to judge it, the thoughts of men concerning His mission would all have been turned by that very mission, to preparing themselves to be judged. But He says that He came into the world to be believed. 'I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth in Me, may not remain in darkness.' Here are two truths incidentally promulgated. The one is that He was Light from all eternity, not merely made Light when He came into the world, as He said of St. John Baptist, that he was a burning and shining light, and as the same may be said in some measure of all those who receive any share of illuminating power. The other truth is that the world was in darkness, and will remain in darkness except so far as it receives the Light that has come into it. Nothing more than the not receiving this Light is necessary, in order that men

may be in darkness. They are not plunged into it anew, they are already in darkness, and remain there, unless they lift themselves out of the darkness. Without faith they must remain in darkness, and therefore their incredulity is enough to insure their perpetual ruin.

Our Lord then seems to pass on to the case of those who had heard Him, but not acted on what He taught, having in His mind, as it may suppose, those of whom St. John has been speaking. 'And if any man hear My words, and keep them not, I do not judge him, for I came,' and am come, 'not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that despiseth Me and receiveth not My words, hath One that judgeth him. The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him at the Last Day.' It may perhaps appear that He makes a distinction between two classes of men in this paragraph, those who hear His words and do not keep them, and those who despise Him and do not receive His words, as if the last case were worse than the first. Thus the first class spoken of would include those who had more or less of faith in our Lord, but who were afraid to confess their faith, and the second class would embrace those who rejected Him contumeliously, as those whom we commonly speak of as our Lord's enemies, who had no faith at all in them because they were resolved not to believe.

There was a wide difference between the two. Of the first class He says that He does not judge them, that is, He passes no sentence upon them, nor punishes them, but this is only for the reason which He assigns. That reason is that He has not come at present to judge, but to save the world. It implies that the time will come when He will come for that purpose.

He does not therefore say that they do not deserve judgment, but that this is not the time for judgment. And then He adds that he that despiseth Him and does not receive His words, hath One that judgeth him. In these words He seems to mean to speak of His Father, of Whom He had spoken in the discussion at the feast of Tabernacles.⁹ 'I seek not My own glory, there is One Who seeketh and judgeth,' thus referring to the words of the great promise in Deuteronomy, of the prophet like unto Moses, when it was said, 'He that will not hear His words which He shall speak in My name, I will be the revenger.'¹⁰ Those who did not receive our Lord, therefore, were not to go unpunished, although our Lord Himself would not judge them now. God in His Providence would judge them for their incredulity, both in this world and in the next, here by the subtraction of graces and light, and by the destruction of their nation by the Romans, and in the next world, unless they repented, by eternal loss.

He adds also, that the judgment will be by His word, 'He that despiseth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath One that judgeth him. The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him at the Last Day.' For as He speaks of the Queen of the South, and the men of Nineve as rising up in judgment against the men of that generation and condemning them, because they had done penance and been listeners to the truth of a much less authoritative teaching than His, so much more would the Jews of his time be confronted at the Last Day by the words He had spoken, and by all the means of grace which they had neglected, and be condemned thereby. In the

⁹ St. John viii. 50.

¹⁰ Deut. xviii. 19.

same sense, apparently, He spoke to the Jews about the accusation against them brought by Moses. 'There is one that accuseth you, Moses, in whom you trust. For if you did believe Moses, you would perhaps believe Me also, for he wrote of Me.'¹¹ They will be judged at the Last Day by the opportunities which they have had. It must certainly increase the responsibility immensely to have had the ineffable blessing of the Word of God, preached by the Incarnate Son of God Himself. If such conditions constitute an immense and unparalleled means of salvation to those who availed themselves of them, they must, on the other hand, add an immense weight of condemnation to those who have turned away from the word so spoken to them. Our Lord said afterwards, 'If I had not come,' Myself come Incarnate into the world, 'and spoken to them,' Myself, not one of the prophets, 'they would not have had sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin.'¹² And in that place He adds the terrible words, 'He that hateth Me, hateth My Father also,' and He explains what He says by speaking of their responsibility in rejecting His miracles, 'Now they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father.'

The concluding sentences emphasize the statement that the word He has spoken will judge its hearers at the Last Day. First, because it has been the word of His Father, the Creator and Judge, Who has committed all judgment unto the Son, because He is the Son of Man, and to Him has been committed the preparation of man for the Judgment by means of the Incarnation. 'For I have not spoken of Myself, but the Father Who sent Me.' He gave the commandment what I should say, and what

¹¹ St. John v. 45, 46.

¹² St. John xv. 22.

I speak, the burthen of My message, and the words in which it is delivered. Perhaps here there may be the same pre-eminence hinted at of the word of our Lord which is mentioned by St. Paul to the Hebrews. 'God Who in sundry times and in divers manners spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all in these days hath spoken to us by His Son.' And again, towards the end of the Epistle, 'A man making void the law of Moses, dieth without mercy under two or three witnesses, how much more do you think he deserveth worse punishments who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath esteemed unclean the blood of the testament by which he was sanctified, and hath offered an affront to the Spirit of Grace?'¹³ The Apostle in this last passage is speaking of the possible apostacy of Christians, and therefore uses stronger language than that which our Lord uses here. But the argument appears to be the same, from the great dignity of the Messenger Who has been despised. In the second place our Lord seems to insist on the fact that the word which He was sent to communicate was 'the word of eternal life,' in the acceptance or rejection of which eternal life depended. It was not, therefore, any word that had been despised, but the message of salvation, which He had delivered most faithfully, earnestly, and fully, in order that those to whom He was sent might not miss the inestimable boon of eternal salvation. 'I know that His commandment is life everlasting. The things, therefore, which I speak, even as the Father said unto Me, so do I speak.'

Thus in calm, clear language our Lord delivered what we may call His solemn protest against His

¹³ Hebrews i. 1, 2; x. 28, 29.

rejection by so many of the Jews, especially their religious leaders. They had not rejected Him, but His Father, that is, not only the Man that spoke to them, but the Godhead united to His Human Nature in one Person, and therefore the Father Who sent Him into the world. He had come, the Eternal Light, as St. John says in the opening of the Gospel. He was the true Light, not communicated or participated, but the Essential Light had come into the world. And His object in coming had been to deliver men from darkness through faith in Him and His words, and so those who did not believe Him were still to abide in darkness, to rescue them from which, by this simple and most easy means, had been the object of the most merciful counsel of God in bringing about the Incarnation.

Our Lord does not dwell on the ineffable blessings of faith, nor draw out all that men are to gain in time and in eternity by believing. He has to speak now of the misery of unbelief. Men have failed in various degrees to close with His offer, and receive His graces. Some have kept their faith to themselves, and let human motives induce them not to make profession thereof. Other men have neglected to hear, or, worse still, have treated Him with contumely and refused to hear Him. This is not the time for judgment, but for warning, and He solemnly tells them that they are already under the judgment of His Father, though He does not Himself at present pass or execute judgment, and that in the Last Day His words will rise up against their judgment. No more Divine authority could have spoken to them. They have had the words put into the mouth of the Sacred Humanity by the Father Himself. No more important message could have been sent them, for it

was a message on the acceptance or rejection of which depended the happiness or the misery of eternity. No greater wisdom could have been put forth in the manner in which the message was imparted so as to make it more acceptable and persuasive, and no greater love could have been exercised than was exercised in the scheme adopted for presenting it to them. In all ways the love and mercy and considerateness and patience and wisdom of God had been put forth to the uttermost, for everything had been done and said as had been chosen and determined, by the Father speaking through the Son.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Doom of Jerusalem.

St. Matt. xxiv. 1—28 ; St. Mark xiii. 1—23 ; St. Luke xxi. 5—24 ;
Story of the Gospels, § 144.

THE sacred historians tell us that when our Lord was leaving the Temple He lingered awhile, and that His disciples drew His attention to the magnificence of the buildings, which had lately been completed. On this He remarked that all was soon to be destroyed, and this led to the question which was asked when He had proceeded some way up on the Mount of Olives and was sitting opposite to the Temple. The question was twofold, and undoubtedly the disciples who asked it hardly understood that there was so great a separation between the two events which were mentioned as was actually the case. The first part of the question related to that which they had in their minds more immediately, that is, the destruc-

tion of Jerusalem. The second part referred to the greater and more distant event of the end of the world, which they were accustomed to consider as almost simultaneous with the former of the destruction of the city. But they certainly distinguished plainly the one event from the other, and our Lord distinguished them with equal plainness in His answer.

He spoke throughout with the indistinctness as to time which is common in all prophecies. It is no part of prophecy, in its ordinary statements, to mark off all the intervals that may be made historically between one point of the prediction and another. The perspective, so to speak, is often wanting in the words, though it may have been ever so clearly defined by the mind of the prophet. That is what constitutes, ordinarily, the chief difficulty of predictions which embrace successive and perhaps long separated events, and it is especially to be held in mind when the earlier of a succession of events which are foretold are types and anticipations of those which are to come after them. This prophecy certainly differs from all others in the Sacred Text, in that it is spoken immediately by our Lord Himself through no other channel than His Sacred Humanity. Our Lord's previsions could have had nothing partial or incomplete about them as they lay before His own mind, as may have been the case with the previsions of the prophets, to which the saying of St. Paul may be applied, 'We know in part, and we prophesy in part.'¹ But in delivering His prophecies He spoke in the manner in which former prophets of His had spoken before Him, and sometimes in their language. The prophecy is meant

¹ 1 Cor. xiii.

to adapt itself to the minds of those to whom it is delivered, as well as to the purpose for which it is given of warning and preparing them in all necessary manners for that which it predicts.

‘And Jesus being come out of the Temple, went away. And as He was going out of the Temple, one of the disciples saith to Him, Master, behold what manner of stones and what buildings are here! And some saying of the Temple, that it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts’—a topic which might have been suggested by what had just been seen as He was sitting in the treasury—‘and His disciples came to show Him the buildings of the Temple. And Jesus answering said, Seest thou all these great buildings? Do you see all these things? Amen, I say to you, these things which you see, the days shall come in which there shall not be left a stone upon a stone that shall not be thrown down, that shall not be destroyed.’

These words of their Blessed Master must have recalled to the minds of the disciples those others which He had used a few days before, on the Day of Palms, when he had wept over Jerusalem, and had predicted in very circumstantial language the destruction of the city. ‘For the days shall come upon thee, and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground and thy children who are in thee, and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone, because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation.’ It was habitual with the Apostles to treasure up our Lord’s words, and this, which seems to have been almost the first pronouncement of the kind upon Jerusalem, must have sunk deep in their hearts, and perhaps have been the

subject of surmise and conversation among them during the days that had passed since. The desolation of the city had been foretold by Daniel² in a passage which was, no doubt, much in the minds of the devout Jews of our Lord's time, for it was in that prophecy that the time for the coming of the Messiah had seemed to be fixed, just as in that of Micheas the place had been assigned for His Birth at Bethlehem. This prophecy of Daniel ended with the prediction of the cutting off of the Messiah and the destruction of the city. It was natural therefore for the disciples to ask about this when they had before their eyes what seemed to be so inconsistent with that prophecy in the splendid buildings of the Temple, which seemed to defy destruction.

'And when He was sitting on Mount Olivet, over against the Temple, they asked Him, the disciples came to Him privately'—and we are told by St. Mark that those who came to Him were four, apart from the others—'Peter and James and John and Andrew asked Him apart, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and when all these things shall begin to come to pass, and be fulfilled, and of the consummation of the world?' The coming of our Lord, as is well known, is a phrase which is used in various senses in the two Testaments, and by our Lord Himself. It sometimes means the time of death, sometimes some great event, as the destruction of Jerusalem, and sometimes the greatest event and destruction of all, the end of the world and the Day of Judgment. In this context it cannot mean the day of death to any individual soul, because that day is to come without

² Dan. xi. 26.

signs preceding it such as can be discerned publicly. But here the coming of our Lord is to have signs that go before it to warn those that are on the look out. We understand it in this prophecy to refer first to that event of which our Lord had more than once lately spoken to His disciples, that is, His coming to destroy the city and Temple of Jerusalem in punishment for the treatment He had received and was to receive at the hands of the nation, and also, as the last words of the question suggest, to the end of the world. These two things being both included in the question, our Lord answers each, and we have now to consider what His reply teaches us concerning each.

‘And Jesus answering said to them, began to say to them,’ that is, the first thing He said to them in answer, was, ‘Take heed that no man seduce you, for many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ, I am He, and the time is at hand, and they will seduce many, go ye not therefore after them.’ This then is the first statement in the prophecy, that there will be much danger of seduction to many, and our Lord’s first note is a note of warning. A second prediction follows, ‘And you shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, of wars and seditions. Fear ye not, be not terrified, see that ye be not troubled. These things must first come to pass, but the end is not presently. For these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.’ The second head of prophetic warning is therefore that they are not to be troubled about political and social disturbances, as if they implied at once the destruction either of the city or the existing fabric of society. ‘Then He said to them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be pestilences and famines,

and great earthquakes in divers places, and terrors from heaven, and there shall be great signs. Now all these things are the beginning of sorrows,' or more literally of 'travail pains,' as if from them a new state of things was to be born. Here then is the third head of this prophecy. There are to be wars between nation and nation, kingdom and kingdom, accompanied by signs in the physical universe and the providential order of the world, such as famines, and pestilences, earthquakes, terrors from heaven, and great portents.

The next portion of the prophecy deals with the treatment which the disciples of our Lord are themselves to meet with before the fulfilment of the whole takes place. 'But look to yourselves. Before all these things they will lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and into prisons, to councils, and in the synagogues you shall be beaten, dragging you before governors and kings for My name's sake, and they shall deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall put you to death, and you shall be hated of all nations for My name's sake, for a testimony unto them, and it shall happen unto you as a testimony, and to all nations the Gospel must first be preached.' And He adds here the precept He has already given, not to think beforehand what they shall say, 'And when they shall lead you and deliver you up, be not thoughtful beforehand what you shall speak, lay it up therefore in your hearts, not to premeditate before how you shall answer, but whatsoever shall be given to you in that hour, that speak ye, for it is not you that speak, but the Holy Ghost. For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to resist and

gainsay.'³ This promise has been already explained.

There follows another and more mournful prediction. 'And many shall be scandalized, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And the brother shall betray the brother unto death, and the father his son, and children rise up against their parents, and shall work their death. And you shall be betrayed by your parents and brethren, and kinsfolk and friends, and some of you they will put to death.' 'And many false prophets shall arise, and shall seduce many. And because iniquity hath abounded, the charity of the many shall grow cold.' Then lastly comes the promise to perseverance. 'But he that shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved. And you shall be hated of all men for My name's sake. But a hair of your head shall not perish. In your patience you shall possess your souls. But he that shall endure to the end, he shall be saved. And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony to all nations, and then shall the consummation come.' This prediction may be considered as separate, foretelling that the Gospel is to be preached everywhere before the end of the world. Thus we have these several great points in the prophecy. Our Lord says that there is to be great danger of seduction from the multitude of false teachers, that there are to be great civil commotions, nation rising against nation, wars and rumours of wars, signs of the anger of God, as pestilences and famines, that there are to be great persecutions of the Church, that many shall be scandalized and fall away, and that the prevalence of lawlessness will

³ St. Luke xxi. 24. See also St. Matt. x. 19; St. Luke xii. 11; St. Mark xiii. 11.

chill the mutual charity of brethren. We may add to these the promise last made, of the universal preaching of the Gospel 'as a witness,' and of the salvation of those who persevere.

We may pause here for awhile, to consider more particularly the clauses in the prophecy which have already been enumerated. There are, as has been said, two distinct subjects in the same prophecy, and the whole question must be which part refers to one, which part to the other, and which to both. But it must be remembered that when we say that the destruction of Jerusalem and the Last Day may be spoken of with equal truth under the phrase of the coming of our Lord, we imply what is otherwise certain, that both these events resemble one the other in many respects, and that the first in time may well be considered as an anticipation of the second. If this is true, then it is also true that the words which apply to the one may also apply to another, and may be equally true of both. They are true of the first in time, in a less perfect sense, true of the latter in time in a more perfect sense. On the other hand, there are many passages in the prophecy, especially that part of it which has not yet been recited, which can hardly have this double application. The passage which immediately follows about the abomination of desolation, and the last verses which have been now quoted, are among these portions of the whole, and the fact that they are so is a sufficient reason for our pausing before proceeding further.

Thus in what our Lord has said, He seems generally to be answering both the questions asked Him at once. That is, He sets forth in His answer, those signs and warnings which may belong to the period before the destruction of Jerusalem, and also to the times which

shall precede His Second Coming, and indeed, in some measure, to the whole history of the Church. If we examine the clauses of the prophecy in order, we may see how far this holds good. First our Lord places the warning against seduction. 'Take heed that no man seduce you.' We can hardly doubt that our Lord when He spoke these words had in view the Church and the great body of her children, rather than the four disciples to whom He was speaking, or their brethren of the Apostolic band. One of that band, alas, was already seduced, but not by the false teachers of whom He speaks. Judas was seduced by Satan and his own evil passions. Our Lord was not speaking of Him. The warning is addressed to the faithful, who would become aware, in due time, of the substance of the prophecy. He says, that many shall come in His Name pretending to be Christ, and shall seduce many. 'Many shall come in My name, saying, I am He, and the time is at hand. Go ye not therefore after them.'

When we consider the deep darkness which veils from the eye of history so much of Apostolic times, we cannot be surprised that we know so comparatively little about the impostors of that period. Yet there is very considerable evidence to show that His prophecy was amply fulfilled even in the years before the destruction of Jerusalem. The early Christian writers mention several, besides the well-known names of Simon Magus and a number of sectarian leaders who sprang from him, Menander, Saturninus, Carpocras, and the whole swarm of Gnostic teachers. None of these pretended to be our Lord in person, but all more or less claimed His power, and seduced people to believe in them. So far, we might follow the opinion of many sound critics in supposing that

warning words of our Lord are meant for the believers of that first age of the life of the Church, which may be said roughly to have been terminated by His coming in the destruction of Jerusalem. But with the history of the Church for so many centuries before us, it is certainly not necessary to limit the prophecy to a few decades at the immediate beginning of that history. It may perhaps be that in those early years, when the growth of the Church was as yet incomplete and the conditions of her existence not yet established, it may have been more easy for an impostor like Simon Magus to seduce men to a false belief, than it might have been in after ages for Arius or Nestorius and Pelagius, and their followers in modern times, to persuade them that the Church of so many centuries and of the whole world could be in error.

If this was so, this one advantage the heresiarchs and false teachers of the earliest ages may have had, but it was probably counterbalanced by the great authority of the immediate companion and successors of the Apostles, and in other ways. But we cannot easily think that our Blessed Lord had not in His mind Christians of all ages till the very last, when He warned them in His prophecy against the seduction of the false Christs. In the Apostolic age they might, almost openly, call themselves by His name. In later ages they would vary their claims by representing as His their own false doctrines. They spoke in His name, and claimed His authority, while denying that of His Church. In this modern heresiarchs and authors of schism are on a level with the earliest impostors. With regard to this part of the prophecy, then, we may say that it was fulfilled before the fall of Jerusalem,

and continues, even now as centuries roll on, to be fulfilled as the end draws nigh. It is as St. Paul writes to St. Timothy, 'Evil men and seducers shall grow worse and worse, erring, and driving into error.'⁴

The next two clauses in the prophecy are those which speak of wars and rumours of wars, of political commotions leading to war between nations, and again of earthquakes, famines, pestilences, signs from heaven. All these are to precede our Lord's coming. There is no doubt historically, that the prediction came true in the time before the destruction of Jerusalem. Even in the regions of which Judæa is the centre, there were wars between Herod and Aretas, between the King of Adiabene and the Arabians and Parthians, and Judæa itself had been in a state of immense and continual confusion for some time before the destruction came. Moreover there were continually 'rumours of wars' which did not break out, the most remarkable of which was the war that Caligula was about to make on the Jewish nation, when he insisted on the erection of his statue in the Temple. This war was prevented by his death. There were also disturbances in every part of the world where the Jews were settled, rising from the Gentile prejudices which became more and more violent against them. A number of these are mentioned by Josephus and some by Philo.

The words about 'nation rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom,' seem also to have had their fulfilment in the singular commotions of the Roman Empire which followed the death of Nero, and which are spoken of by Tacitus. That was the first time that the 'national spirit' broke loose from the con-

⁴ 2 Tim. iii. 13.

strait in which it was everywhere held down by the policy and the immense strength of Rome. It made a new epoch in the history of the Empire. A long list, also, of the earthquakes, famines, and pestilences of that time has been made by some commentators. So there is little doubt that those living at the time of the Jewish war must have had abundant means of verifying the prophetic signs which are here enumerated. These signs, however, are in many respects different in character from the set of signs given by the Evangelists in the latter part of the prophecy, which certainly relates, not to the destruction of Jerusalem, but to the end of the world.

At the same time, what has been said about the false prophets and seducers, already mentioned in the first clause of this prophecy, must be repeated here. The signs now mentioned as preceding the destruction of Jerusalem may be quite enough to fulfil the prediction, if it is to be understood as limited to that event. But they are in themselves signs which are continually repeated in the history of the Church and the world, and each time that they break out upon the gaze of a fresh generation of the faithful they more and more approach in character the notes that may be expected to herald the great Day of Judgment. They do not constitute the normal state of things, either in the Church or in the world, but they appear frequently at times of trial, and sometimes in so striking a manner that the saints of the time are inclined to believe that the end is certainly at hand. Such was St. Gregory's idea, as it seems, in his time, and, at a later period, was the impression of St. Vincent Ferrer, not to speak of others. The predictions, therefore, which describe one great period of this kind, may very well pass on

to another. When this prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem is considered in this light, we may be inclined at least to doubt whether our Lord was speaking of that only. The whole history of the Church, whose continual earnest prayer is, *Da propitius pacem in diebus nostris*, shows that there are but rare breathing times from the continual tumults and conflicts in which human society lives.

The seductions, the wars and rumours of wars, the movements of nations one against another—has there been any time in the history of the Church in which these things were more conspicuous than the age in which we live? The armaments of the Christian nations of Europe one against another are almost infinitely more expensive and more powerful for destruction than all the armies of the Roman Empire, and of all its assailants in the first century put together. The national spirit no longer lets a people be content with forming a peaceful part of the population of an Empire. It has been the reason for nations breaking off, not only from earthly empires, but from the worldwide unity of the Catholic Church and from her unchangeable Creed. It is not necessary to continue here a train of ideas which might lead us far. It is enough to say that the fulfilment of the words of our Lord in the present time is on a larger scale and more deeply written in letters of blood in the records of the time than was the case before the destruction of Jerusalem. And it is naturally though sadly to be presumed that these signs of which we are speaking will become more and more conspicuous as the end of all things draws more and more near. These things, in the days of the Apostles, were almost accidental phenomena on the surface of history. Now they have

become the principal agents and elements in the annals of the world. Nations no longer raise armies for an emergency. Nations are themselves gigantic and permanent armies. The other sign, of false teaching, is also more conspicuous than ever. The 'Creed of Science,' falsely so called, has taken deeper root, and numbers more adherents than the doctrines of the Gnostics or the early heretics. The natural antipathies of race are taken for granted as invariable principles which supersede justice and law. There wants but little to the picture of the 'beginning of travail pangs,'—except, perhaps, something still more terrible than what the earth has yet seen in the disturbance of those physical laws of the material universe, the uniformity of which is the one thing in which the false prophets of the day believe.

The elements in this prediction which yet remain to be spoken of in reference to the days before the destruction of Jerusalem, are those which may be summed up under the general head of persecution and its results. The Apostles are to be hated of all men for the sake of the name of our Lord. There is to be much scandal, much betrayal, and a great prevalence of 'iniquity'—'lawlessness'⁵—which is given as the reason for the 'growing cold' of the bond of charity among the great body of the faithful, words which seem to point clearly to disregard of the laws of the Church as the great cause of the dissolution of Unity, so that even good people will be content to talk composedly of the 'broken unity' of the Church. When our Lord adds, towards the end of this prediction, that the Gospel of the Kingdom is to be preached in the whole world for a testimony to all nations, and then the end shall

⁵ διὰ τὸ πληθυνθῆναι τὴν ἀνομίαν, ψυχῆσεται ἡ ἀγάπη τῶν πολλῶν.

S. Matt. XX. 14
 and because iniquity shall abound
 the love of many shall grow cold

come, it seems to some that He almost shuts out the interpretation of the prophecy which has its fulfilment in the destruction of Jerusalem. And yet it may be said that if the end of the world had followed immediately after the destruction of Jerusalem the prediction might have been said to have been sufficiently fulfilled. The Gospel was virtually proclaimed to all nations at the Day of Pentecost, so that St. Paul, when he wrote to the Romans some years before the Jewish war, could say of the preachers of the Gospel, that 'their sound hath gone forth unto all the earth, and their words unto the end of the whole world,'⁶ and that, as a matter of fact, there is reason to believe that the Apostles themselves, and still more their disciples, preached far more widely and universally than any existing documents testify. Still, however, it may appear more probable that in these particular verses of this great prediction our Lord, while laying down general truths, intends His words to apply to the later of the great subjects before Him rather than to the earlier of the two.

Before we part from this first portion of the prediction of our Lord—which we understand to apply in all its main features to both these subjects of inquiry generally—there are a few particular points which may be noticed a little more at length. In the first place, it will be observed that the clause, 'You shall be hated by all men for My name's sake,' seems to be repeated more than once, or at least, if not repeated, it is inserted by different Evangelists at different stages of the prediction. St. Matthew puts it at the very outset of that part of his prophecy which relates to the treatment of the disciples them-

⁶ Rom. x. 18.

selves. St. Mark and St. Luke place it towards the end of the same portion, after the betrayal of one another by Christians, and brethren, and children, and also the murder of some. It seems probable that the 'hatred of all men' is, in one sense, the inheritance of the Catholic Church, as our Lord predicted. 'If the world hate you, know you that it hated Me before you? If you had been of the world, the world would love its own, but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.'⁷ The Church rebukes the principles of the world, denies its authority, exposes its impostures, and threatens it with judgment. The world must always, therefore, instinctively hate it. Besides, the world is not merely an impostor and a liar, but one that knows its own lies to be lies, and its own impostures to be impostures. It is also under the dominion of Satan, who hates the Church as he hated our Lord. All the instincts of the kingdom of Satan are against the Church, and as long as her children, and especially her rulers, are faithful to her, they fight against Satan and attack his kingdom. This brings all the force of the hatred of the world not only upon the Church as such, but upon individual Christians who keep her laws and are faithful in their allegiance to her rights. It is not astonishing that the more men come to resemble our Lord, and avow their obedience to the Church, the more they incur the world's enmity, which may not always rage against them openly, but which is stung to the quick by their lives, which rebuke its maxims, and which are always felt to threaten them with the punishment they deserve, and, as we see, to threaten them in a manner which causes discomfort in their hearts. The

⁷ St. John xv. 18.

work of the Apostolic ministry includes the government of the Church, and the maintenance of unity and discipline, in particular, is almost certain, if loyally performed, to bring with it the hatred of men, because it implies the duty of reminding them of their obligations and insisting on their discharge. Thus the words of our Lord may have different senses in the different passages.

Another remark to be made on this part of the prophecy is that St. Matthew omits the paragraph which conveys the injunction of the faithful not to premeditate when they have to answer before tribunals, and the like, because the Holy Ghost will put words into their mouth at such times. For St. Matthew has already given this same precept, in substance, in an earlier part of his Gospel, in his account of our Lord's charge to the Apostles before sending them forth to preach.⁸ This seems to be the reason why this Evangelist omits it here. It is true that St. Luke inserts it both here and in another place,⁹ and that it is unusual in him to have to repeat what he has already said. But this part of St. Luke's Gospel is not so crowded with details nor so much marked by compression of those details as the parallel chapters of St. Matthew. Again, the promise to perseverance, 'He that shall endure unto the end, he shall be saved,' comes in two somewhat different connections in the reverse Evangelists. St. Matthew puts it after the prediction of the decay of charity. 'The charity of the many shall grow cold, but he that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved.' St. Mark puts it after the prediction of the hatred of the world. 'And you shall be hated by all men for My name's sake; but he that shall endure unto the end, he shall

⁸ St. Matt. x. 19. ⁹ St. Luke xii. 12.

be saved.' The words may well have been spoken in both connections, and we learn from them what it is that we are to persevere in—the outward unity of the faith in the Catholic Church, and the observance of God's law, in all those points especially which excite the anger of the world.

There can be little doubt historically, that this prediction of the hatred of the world was very remarkably fulfilled in the earlier ages, and even in the times before the destruction of Jerusalem. When St. Paul, on his arrival at Rome, called together the chiefs of the Jews, to explain his position to them, we are told that they said they had received no complaints against him from Judæa, but they said, 'We desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest, for as concerning this sect'—the Christians—'we know that it is gainsaid everywhere.'¹⁰ Tacitus, speaking of the false charge made by Nero against the Christians,¹¹ concerning the great fire at Rome, speaks of them in the strongest terms of reprobation, and of their religion as *exitialis superstitio*. The people were ready to believe of them any crime laid to their charge. The passages in Suetonius and Pliny are well known.¹² The works of the early apologists are full of the fact that the Christians were commonly

¹⁰ In the first Epistle of St. Peter, written earlier than the date of these words of the Jews, the calumnies against the Christians are mentioned, ii. 12, iii. 16, iv. 14, 16. The same had been predicted by our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount, St. Matt. v. 11; in the Sermon on the Plain, St. Luke vi. 22; in the first Charge to the Apostles, St. Matt. x. 22. See also St. John xvi. 2. There are many traces in the Acts and in the Epistles of the growing hatred against the Christians, especially on the part of the Jews, whose calumnies affected the public opinion everywhere. See Acts xvii. 6, 7; xviii. 6; xix. 9; xxii. 21, 28; xxiv. 5, 6, 9, 14.

¹¹ Ann. xv. 44.

¹² Suetonius, in *Neron*, xvi. 3; Pliny, *Epist.* x. 97.

charged with atheism, cannibalism, unnatural lusts, incest, and the like. A modern writer of great learning says that 'to cite the passages from the works of these apologists would be an endless task, as they occur almost in every page.'¹³ It must be enough here to speak of the causes which may probably be assigned for the prevalence of these calumnies, in which we shall follow in the main, though very briefly, the author whom we have just quoted.

The charge of atheism was probably founded on the denial by the Christians of the divinity of the gods of the popular religion, whom they also habitually asserted to be devils, according to the words of St. Paul, 'The things which the heathen sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils and not to God.'¹⁴ The words of St. Paul are a quotation from Moses,¹⁵ showing the antiquity of the belief as to the idols. The charge of banqueting upon human flesh probably had its origin in the doctrine of the Blessed Eucharist, which was kept secret even from catechumens, as St. Augustine witnesses, but may easily have transpired in such a shape as to be the subject of popular misrepresentation. The tales as to the sacrificing and devouring of infants may have had some connection with Baptism. The *agapæ*, or feasts of love, which took place after the celebration of the Adorable Sacrifice, may have given occasion to the foul calumnies about the promiscuous intercourse of the sexes which were in circulation, especially as these meetings could not be held in the daytime, when the open profession of Christianity was unsafe. Moreover, the pagans were well aware that their

¹³ *Greswell on the Parables*, vol. v. part i. p. 284.

¹⁴ 1 Cor. x. 20.

¹⁵ Deut. xxxii. 17.

own secret rites and mysteries, such as the Eleusinian, the Bacchanalian, the Samothracian, reeked with impurity, and they were ready enough to attribute the same foulness to the Christian rites which were kept secret, as they would have said, from all but the initiated. The calumnies against the Christians were industriously propagated by apostate Christians, and in many cases, when the persecutions began, which was the case before the fall of Jerusalem, confessions of the imputed crimes were wrung by torture from women and slaves, who were ordinarily selected for such purposes. This was the case at Vienne and Lyons in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, as Eusebius mentions.¹⁶ Pliny, in his letter to Trajan, mentions that he has put to the torture two women, *quæ ministræ dicebantur*. It must also be mentioned that, especially in the earliest times, there was hardly any limit to the industrious calumnies of the Jews against the Christians, who were also made responsible for the opinions and practices of the swarm of sects who called themselves by their name, many of which were Jewish in origin, and many of which, also, were of the lowest possible morality.

Thus the calumnies against the Christian religion may be seen from the very first to have been the most powerful weapon of all that were used by the instruments of Satan against it. The claims of the Church to authority and the exclusive possession of the truth, together with the purity of her law and the strictness of her discipline, were naturally odious to human pride, while the material interests of large bodies of men, the priests among the Jews, and the tribes of dependents on the Temple worship among the pagans, were arrayed against her. She came

¹⁶ *Hist. Eccl.* i. 196.

into the world with the inextinguishable hatred of the nation which had given her birth and crucified her Founder already kindled to the utmost, a hatred which never rested or relented, and shrank from no cruelty or falsehood in its warfare against her. She taught many new and sublime doctrines which were capable of the foulest perversion and misrepresentation among the ignorant, and there were things in her system which the impure minds of the heathen could easily fasten on as grounds for the gravest charges, which were confirmed by the lying avowals of apostates and the detestable parodies of heretics.

The 'strong man armed'¹⁷ of whom our Lord spoke did not let his house be broken into and his goods rifled without a stubborn resistance, and he had all the power of the world at his disposal. And he has struggled on even to the present day, when many of the arms he used of old have been broken or wrested from his hand, but when he still uses against the Catholic Church the one weapon which is more powerful than all the rest—the weapon of lying. The might of written speech in the world is a hundredfold greater in our days than in any that have preceded them. The Press has more power against the truth than the whole series of persecuting Emperors. In different shapes, in order that they may be the more efficient for the purpose, the old undying lies are dressed up for successive generations, and the modern enemies of the Church have only to give them the very slightest colour of novelty to find thousands of readers greedy to believe anything that can cast a stain on the religion of Jesus Christ. These later notes, therefore, given in the prophecy, may seem to have been very remarkably fulfilled

¹⁷ St. Matt. xii. 29.

in the days before the destruction of Jerusalem. But they must be admitted to characterize great prominent features in the perpetual warfare against the Church which can be limited to no special period, and which are, in principle, as rife in these latter days as in any before them.

It is characteristic of St. Luke that he is the one of the Evangelists who inserts, after the promise to perseverance, the two loving sentences of our Lord which He then added: 'Not a hair of your heads shall perish'—'In your patience you shall possess your souls.' The first of these sayings was the proverbial expression about the 'hairs of the head,' which was used by the Jews and others to express the great value set upon a person, whose preservation was very dear and much thought of, and here it reminds us of our Lord's words that not a sparrow falls to the ground without the Providence of God. The sentence promises the Divine protection to the Apostles and their followers, not meaning, of course, that they shall not be put to death or subjected to ill-treatment of various kinds, when it is the will of God that they shall suffer for His glory, their own great profit, and the good of the Church, but that everything of this kind shall be carefully and lovingly meted out and regulated according to what is best. The second sentence is not perfectly clear in the English version, on account of the meaning of the word which is translated 'possess.' The word means to acquire, gain, and in that sense 'possess' or become possessor of something. There is also a difference in the reading in various manuscripts, so that it is sometimes in the future tense, 'ye shall possess,' sometimes, 'possess ye.' The meaning, however, is simple. The words mean that by their

patience and endurance the Apostles, and those who follow them, are to gain their own souls, that is, the salvation of their souls hereafter, and the possession and command of them here. Their salvation does not depend on their being free from trouble or pain or danger or difficulty, it does not depend on the success of their work for the souls of men, or on the splendour of their miracles, still less on things external, such as the applause or favour of men. They may gain a great many things in that way, and yet they may lose themselves, by vanity or self-satisfaction. But the one thing they will gain, by their patience and endurance under all the various trials to which they are exposed, is salvation. As every day passes, bringing with it an ever fresh crop of annoyances, labours, toils, disappointments, dangers, alarms, it will, if they meet all these with patience, leave behind it a rich harvest of merit and of great increase in virtue and strength, and at the end they will find themselves in possession of salvation.

We find this idea repeated for us by the Apostles, as if they had cherished up the words of our Lord in which they are conveyed. St. Peter, in his first Epistle,¹⁸ writes to the Christian Jews of the 'Dispersion,' who were evidently beginning to feel the heavy weight of persecution for the faith: 'The time is that judgment should begin at the house of God. And if first at us, what shall be the end of them that believe not the Gospel of God? And if the just man shall scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear! Wherefore let them also that suffer according to the will of God commend their souls in good deeds to the faithful

¹⁸ 1 St. Peter iv. 17.

Creator.' These words exactly convey the idea of the 'patience' mentioned in the text. St. James takes up the strain in his Epistle, written to Christians similarly circumstanced with those whom St. Peter addressed. 'My brethren, count it all joy when you shall fall into divers temptations, knowing that the trial of your faith worketh patience, and patience hath a perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, failing in nothing.'¹⁹ St. Paul draws out the doctrine more fully to the Romans. 'We glory,' he says, 'in the hope of the glory of the sons of God.' But that is not all. 'Not only so, but we glory also in tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience trial,' or proof, 'and trial hope, and hope confoundeth not, because the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, Who is given to us.'²⁰ The crown and reward of all their patience is the gift of heavenly charity poured into their hearts by the Holy Ghost.

We may now proceed to what may be considered the second portion of this great prophecy, which beyond all doubt refers mainly and directly to the destruction of Jerusalem. Our Lord here warns the faithful to be on the look out for the signs, by observance of which they may escape that terrible chastisement which is to fall on the nation and city as a vengeance of His murder, and for all the just blood that shall have been shed from the beginning of time. As we shall see, He speaks most plainly and circumstantially. 'When, therefore, you shall see the abomination of desolation, standing where it ought not (he that readeth, let him understand),' which last clause is repeated both by St. Matthew

¹⁹ St. James i. 3, 4.

²⁰ Rom. v. 2-5.

and St. Mark, while the former, writing for the Jews, has, 'Which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place,' &c. St. Luke does not quote the prophet, and simply says, 'When you shall see Jerusalem compassed about with an army, then know that the desolation thereof is at hand.'

There is no contradiction in the reports of the three Evangelists, for it is perfectly reasonable to suppose that our Lord spoke both the sentence which is given by St. Matthew and St. Mark, and the sentence which is given by St. Luke. For He must have known that His words would be of the utmost value both to the Jewish and Gentile Christians, and He must have had them both in His mind. It is quite possible, of course, that the words recorded by St. Matthew and St. Mark may have required some such explanation as that which is contained in the words related by St. Luke, but it is far more consistent with reverence for the text of Scripture to suppose that both accounts represent accurately the words of our Lord than that one account is an independent explanation of the other. 'Then let them that are in Judæa flee unto the mountains,' and the rest, which will be explained presently. It is not certain that the words quoted by St. Luke are a direct commentary on the words about Daniel the prophet, and therefore, it is not certain that 'Jerusalem encompassed by an army' means exactly the same as the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place. But it seems on the whole that the one phrase explains the other. In this case the abomination of desolation would refer to the idolatrous ensigns of the Roman armies, bearing the images of the Emperors, which were made the objects of worship, and when these were seen displayed all round

Jerusalem, as was the case when the army of Cestius Gallus encircled the city, the sign would have been given and understood by the Christians.

‘Then let them that are in Judæa flee unto the mountains, and those who are in the midst thereof, depart out, and those who are in the countries, enter not into it.’ Then St. Luke, St. Matthew, and St. Mark add these words, ‘Let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, nor enter therein to take anything out of the house, and let him that is in the field not turn back to take his garment. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things may be fulfilled that are written. And wo to them that are with child, and that give suck in those days. And pray ye, that your flight be not in the winter, or on the sabbath-day. For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and they shall be led away captives into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles until the times of the nations shall be fulfilled. For in those days shall be such tribulations such as were not from the beginning of the creation which God created until now, neither shall be. And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved, but for the sake of the elect whom He hath chosen He hath shortened the days.’

These verses seem undoubtedly to refer to the terrible tribulations which fell on the Holy City at the time of its siege and destruction by Titus. It is clear, too, that they cannot refer to any date later than that at which the city was surrounded by the wall which the Romans built during the siege, for after that it would have been impossible to carry out

the warning to flee to the mountains, and the other against any entering the city from outside. The history of the first siege, as it may be called, of Jerusalem, by Cestius Gallus, some years before the final catastrophe of the city, is very interesting, as illustrating the prophecy of our Lord. The Jews were stung into revolt in the spring of A.D. 66, by the cruelties of Gessius Florus, on which Cestius Gallus, the President of Syria, marched from Antioch in October to punish them. It was about the time of the feast of Tabernacles that he arrived. He seems to have temporized, whether from fear whether he had with him forces sufficient to put down the revolt, or, as is more probable, because he hoped to reduce it by negotiation with the large party among the Jews who wished for peace. Josephus tells us that at that time the mass of the nation was unprepared for and indisposed to war, and that more than once Cestius seemed to have it in his power to take the city and end the revolt.

But Cestius ended by several fatal blunders. He encamped within view of the city (on Scopus) on the 4th of October. After three days he took possession of Bezetha, the northern side of the city, and on the 12th he attacked the Temple, and might have forced his way into it if he had pleased. On the day that he possessed himself of Bezetha, some offers were made to admit him to the rest of the city, but he delayed, and the war party found out the intrigue, and threw the authors of it from the walls. On the day on which he attacked the Temple, the same party nearly despaired of a successful resistance, and were preparing to evacuate the Temple and seek safety in flight. Suddenly, Cestius withdrew his forces, retired again to Scopus, and began a formal

retreat. In the course of this his forces were almost completely routed by the Jews who pursued him. This unhappy victory over the Roman army gave the war party the predominance, and was in truth, as Josephus says, the ruin of the whole nation. This unexpected success put the whole city into the power of the war party, and, such was the prejudice with which the Jews regarded the Christians, that the latter would have been in the greatest danger from this cause alone, if they had remained. But it appears that the Christians understood the appearance of the army of Cestius as the warning sign which our Lord had given, for they took the opportunity to leave the city and take refuge at Pella, which was a part of the dominion of the younger Agrippa, who was an ally of the Romans, and was therefore left in peace.

We have in these undoubted facts of history a Providential arrangement by which the Christian community at Jerusalem was first warned of the coming calamities, and then given an opportunity of making their escape to a place of safety. It is certainly very natural to look upon the presence of the Roman standards in sight of the city, and even in the precincts of the Temple itself, or its neighbourhood, as a fulfilment of that sign which our Lord had given them, taking it from the well-known prophecy of Daniel. The destruction of the army of Cestius was followed by a long pause, for the year after this occurrence was spent by Vespasian in the reduction of Galilee, and it was not till the opening of the following year (A.D. 68) that he undertook the siege of Jerusalem, from which, however, at the last moment, he was called away by the news of the revolt in Gaul, and the death of Nero. It is clear

that there could have been no chance of escape either when Vespasian approached the city, or when the siege was afterwards undertaken by Titus. Our Lord tells the disciples that when they see the sign which He gives them in this prophecy, they are to know that the desolation is at hand. Again, as has been said, the state of things in the city after the retreat of Cestius up to the time of the siege by Titus would have been full of danger to the Christians. As has been said, they retired then, and none of them, it is said, perished.

The description given in the verses which have last been quoted is terrible indeed, but it does not seem too terrible when compared even with the accounts that have come down to us, which must be supposed to be silent as to many details of a chastisement without parallel in the history of the world. It must be remembered that the Jews were now made the victims of the just severity of God, avenging on them all their national crimes, and especially our Lord's Death. They had been brought into the Holy Land as the executors of the judgment, which had been accumulating for centuries, against the nations whom they were commissioned to exterminate for the abominable and unnatural crimes of which they had been guilty. We are told that it was a complaint on the part of God against the Jews that they had not done their work of extermination so completely as it was required by His justice, and yet we know how fearful are the accounts which are given of the slaughter of whole nations in the early historical books of the Old Testament. Now the Jews were, not the executioners, but the victims, and, as St. Paul says of them before this time, 'The wrath of God was come upon them to

the uttermost.' It would have been according to the justice of God that the whole nation should have perished for the Blood of our Lord, as Caiphas had said when he uttered his unconscious prophecy at the moment when he proposed the death of one man instead of the nation. But St. Paul tells the Romans, when speaking of the rejection of the Jews, 'As concerning the Gospel, indeed, they are enemies for your sake, but as touching the election, they are most dear for the sake of the fathers, for the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance.'²¹

And so our Lord here says, 'In those days there shall be great tribulations, such as were not from the beginning of the creation which God created until now, neither shall be, and unless the Lord had shortened the days, no flesh shall be saved, but for the sake of the elect whom He hath chosen, He hath shortened the days.' This may be understood in two ways, 'The elect whom He hath chosen,' may be the Christian Jews, and it is certain that a provision was made, as we have seen, by which they were enabled to escape. But it may perhaps appear that this was an exemption from the chastisement, rather a sparing of some of those on whom it actually fell. And it may be understood that but for the 'shortening of the days,' the whole Jewish nation throughout the world would have been exterminated, as they had exterminated the inhabitants of the land before them. But God, Whose gifts and calling are 'without repentance,' had it in His designs once more in the end of time to gather back that guilty nation to Himself, and so He in His judgment remembered His mercy, and left some, in order that the nation might live on, and, when the time of the

²¹ Romans xi. 28, 29.

Gentiles had passed away, be in its turn converted to the Church. And this seems to be contained in the words which St. Luke has recorded. 'They shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the nations be fulfilled.'

The destruction of life in the Jewish war, and the disturbances which preceded it, is reckoned by some calculators at between two and three millions. This, however, was but a portion of the loss of life, for there were massacres of the Jews in various parts of the Empire, and an immense number besides were sold as slaves. It must also be remembered that the miserable Jews who remained were often breaking out into rebellion and outrages, which provoked most bloody retaliation on the part of their oppressors. In the reign of Trajan they are said to have massacred or caused the death of as many as four hundred and fifty thousand persons in Libya, the neighbourhood of Cyrene, and Egypt, and also in Mesopotamia, and in the suppression which followed we are told that they were nearly exterminated in Egypt, Africa, and Mesopotamia. They rose again in fierce rebellion under Hadrian, under Barchochab. The war which ensued was almost as important as the war of Vespasian and Titus, and lasted as long as nine years. There was a great siege of Bethar, like that of Jerusalem. Five hundred thousand persons perished by the sword alone, and an unknown number besides by pestilence and fire. The Rabbis relate that twice the number of persons that came out of Egypt at the Exodus perished in that war, that is, twelve hundred thousand grown persons. The Jews then had a false Christ

in whom they believed—their leader Barchochab. It was after the suppression of this great rebellion that the parts of Jerusalem which had been left standing by Titus were levelled with the ground. The Temple was ploughed up by Annius Rufus, and was so in the time of Eusebius.²² A Roman colony was planted on the spot by Hadrian, but the Jews were forbidden to settle in Judæa, or come within sight of Jerusalem on pain of death. We need not pursue the history further.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Doom of the World.

St. Matt. xxiv. 29—36 ; St. Mark xiii. 24—34 ; St. Luke xxi. 25, 26 ;
Story of the Gospels, §§ 144, 145.

AFTER the passage in which the destruction and desolation of Jerusalem was foretold, the prophecy of our Lord seems to pause before He proceeded to the signs which are to foretell the destruction of the world and the Day of Judgment. It has been observed already as to this great prophecy, that it must be remembered that it is not only a prophecy of the two great events about which the disciples had asked Him, but also, and all through, a prophecy deeply tinged, so to speak, with a character of admonition, exhortation, and instruction. It was our Lord's last instruction to the Apostles of this kind, for, as we shall see, the instructions conveyed in the last great discourse on the evening of Holy

²² *Demonstratio Evangelica*, v. 13, 273.

Thursday were more doctrinal, and pitched in a more sublime key of thought. Nor need we suppose that our Lord felt obliged to confine Himself within the limits of the questions which the Apostles had put to Him. In the minds of the Apostles, there was no very clear conception of what has been called the perspective of the prophecy, that is, they did not know how far in point of time the destruction of Jerusalem was separated from the end of the world, how much was to happen between the two, what a glorious unfolding was to take place of the counsels of God in the history of the successive ages of the Catholic Church—an unfolding of which we do not know how much more than what is already past remains to be seen by future generations.

But to our Lord all was clear and distinct. He saw the history of all the generations that have succeeded one another since the destruction of Jerusalem, as well as that of those which are yet to come, all the changing and shifting phase of the undying war against the truth of which the earth is to be the scene, all the succession of nations and empires, the vicissitudes which are to mark the path of the Church across the stormy water, the heresies, the schisms, the glories of the saints as they rose in succession on the field, the consolations and triumphs of the Church of Christ as well as her sorrows and afflictions. It is not wonderful if our Lord should have given a few words to this long and ever-shifting battle kept up by the power of Hell against Him and His. We may consider the passage that follows in this light, as intended by our Lord to give us guidance as to the chief dangers to Christians, dangers which were rife at the time of the Jewish revolt, dangers which will be certainly not less rife at the end of the world,

dangers which are always passing in the interval between these two catastrophes.

‘Then,¹ if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ, He is there, do not believe him. For there shall rise up false Christs and false prophets, and they shall show great signs and wonders, so as to deceive, if it were possible, even the elect. Take ye heed, therefore, Lo, I have foretold you all things.’ Thus far St. Matthew and St. Mark use the same words. St. Mark does not continue the next sentence, which is given by St. Matthew, but has been anticipated by St. Luke in an earlier part of his Gospel. ‘If therefore they shall say to you, Behold He is in the desert, go ye not out, Behold He is in the closets, believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and appeareth even into the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. Wheresoever the body is, there shall the eagles also be gathered together.’

It is clear that this whole passage contains two prophecies of warning. The first is the warning against being seduced by false claims to the office of Christ, which will be continually made by the emissaries of evil. No matter what may be the signs

¹ It has often been said that the readers of the Gospels have to notice the way in which the Greek word which answers to ‘then’ is used by the Evangelists, especially St. Matthew. In many cases it has no reference at all to what has preceded the sentence which it begins. It seems often to mean ‘at the time of which I am going to speak,’ rather than ‘at the time of which I have been speaking.’ In passages in St. Matthew, who does not follow the order of time in preference to that of thought, this may create great confusion unless the reader understands his meaning. The passage immediately before the verse we are speaking of in St. Matthew relates to the destruction of Jerusalem. The passage we are commenting on refers, as may be thought, to the period before the end of the world, either immediately, or indefinitely, but after the destruction of Jerusalem.

and wonders which they may adduce in support of their claims, our Lord says peremptorily, do not believe them, 'Behold I have told you beforehand.' That ought to be enough for faithful servants of our Lord. But there is also an assurance added, which St. Luke, though he omits it here, has already mentioned, where he records our Lord's former words in anticipation of the present prophecy. This second assurance consists in this. Not only has our Lord foretold the coming of the false Christs and prophets, and told us not to heed their claims nor attend to the signs they show, but He adds further that there will always be evidence sufficient to fill the minds of the faithful with a conviction of His presence with them, that will be quite enough to make it superfluous for them even to consider the pretensions of the false teachers. This seems to be the meaning of the words, 'If therefore they shall say to you, Behold He is in the desert, go ye not out, Behold He is in the closets, believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and appeareth even into the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.' The meaning of this passage seems to be something of this kind. We are kept from giving in to false doctrines and impostures of any kind, in two ways. The first way to see through the falsehood and penetrate the imposture is to remember the warnings of our Lord against seduction. This is one way of saving ourselves from being deluded. And in this way we gain a fresh evidence of the truth—for our Lord has told us beforehand that there are to be these pretended signs, which thus evidence to us their own falsity.

Another way is, that our minds should be so fully possessed by intelligent conviction of the truth which we believe that we have no need of the former process.

All the false evidences do not touch us, because we have a clear hold of the truth and are satisfied with it. There cannot be two Christs, two Gods, two revelations, two ways of salvation. 'There is one Body, one Spirit, one God, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all.' And as a matter of fact, this possession of the truth is enough, and is the ordinary safeguard of the faithful against error. The children of the Church have no obligation to examine for themselves the doctrines or the teachers of the day, new philosophies, new theories of the world, religion, and the like. The great majority of Christians live in peace under the guidance of the Church, and feel no necessity for examination of the details of her doctrine, knowing that her faithfulness to her office in teaching them is guaranteed by our Lord's own promise. Persons in such a disposition are not kept from listening to delusions simply by the authority of a command like that expressed in the text, 'Go not after them, nor follow them.' If they had no satisfaction in the truths they possess, no enjoyment, no repose, they might be caught by the attractiveness of novelty, and curiosity might lead them to the foolish and incautious examination of doctrines which are far above them, and which ought to be received with rejoicing faith. But by the mercy of God it is with Catholics, to some extent, as our Lord said to the Samaritan woman, 'We adore that which we know.' Her fellow-townsmen told her, after our Lord had been with them but two days, 'We now believe, not for thy saying, for we ourselves have heard Him, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world.'² Our faith rests on the witness of the Church, but the

² St. John iv. 42.

truth to which she witnesses feeds and satisfies and enriches and elevates and enlarges our minds.

The mind of man cannot live without truth. It is perpetually gnawed by what a modern writer has called

The hungry thought, which must be fed.

Falsehood can never satisfy it—and this is the history of the immense and restless curiosity by which the minds of men outside the Church are continually devoured. The children of the Church are not a prey to this insatiable curiosity. Nothing but truth can appease the craving of the mind, but truth can, and when truth is received by faith, we have a light of God within to keep quiet the flutterings of curiosity, and the mind is at peace. It is the mercy of God which makes the act of faith the same in the learned as in the unlearned, in the man of highest genius and culture as in the most unlettered peasant and child. And the truths of faith are not only true, they bring with them an assurance of their truth which nothing else possesses, but they are also rich and satisfying and sweet and consoling. The more men live in and on them, the more are their minds freed from the slavery of restlessness and uncertainty, and rise to the glorious liberty of the sons of God. A mind perpetually occupied on heavenly things has no room for earthly. A mind fed on the pure contemplations of virgin souls has no room for images of defilement. A mind filled with charity, the love of God, and of its neighbour, has no room for anger, resentment, suspicion, and other evil passions. So a mind habitually fed on the truths of the Christian religion has no room for the fantastic dreams of false creeds or false prophets.

It is thus a kind of disloyalty for the children of

truth to entertain the sophistries of error, which ought to fall off from the minds of Christians without tainting them. The security which is thus furnished against the cries, 'Lo here, lo there,' is internal, and is part of the contentment which is the reward and the fruit of humble faith. As St. Paul says, 'We know whom we have believed,' or trusted. But there is another and external security, in the world-wide Church, always the same, always one in charity and in faith. And it seems to be this that our Lord alludes to when He says that the great signs and wonders wrought by the false prophets might seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. For the elect are His chosen children, and their union with Him is so perfect in mind as well as in heart, that no errors can seduce them, and in the second place, they will have so firm a grasp on the truth secured by their loyalty to the Church, as to be again secured by that against all seduction.

It has been already said³ that the image of the lightning seems to contain two features. One feature is the extreme brilliancy of the lightning, which is seen at once everywhere. The other is the suddenness of the flash, which startles every one. There are also two senses to the Greek word which we translate 'coming,' when we speak of our Lord's coming at the end of the world, and at other times. The one, and the etymological sense, is what answers to our English word 'presence,' and the other answers to the word 'coming,' or becoming present. Thus if the lightning flash were permanent as well as brilliant, it would answer to the presence of our Lord in the Church always, and His coming at any particular time, as at the Last Day, would answer

³ *The Preaching of the Cross*, vol. iii. p. 84.

to the lightning flash breaking in for a moment upon the darkness. It may perhaps be understood in this passage in both senses, as has been said before. In any case this interpretation represents a signal truth. Catholics are secured against the delusions which our Lord foretells by the fact that they live habitually in the light of the Church, which shines from 'one end of heaven to the other.' And when our Lord does really come, His coming will be as manifest and unmistakeable as the lightning flash. Men do not say, 'Lo, here, or Lo, there,' of a light which every one can see and which no one can help seeing.

The passage which now follows must be certainly considered as having reference to the end of the world. Our Lord has answered the question of His disciples about His coming at the destruction of Jerusalem, and, if the opinion here followed be true, has given the necessary counsels and warnings which may preserve the faithful in the intermediate ages—far longer, as they lay before His eyes, than they were in the opinions of those who lived when He spoke. Then He proceeds, in a few sentences, to describe the catastrophe of the world. 'And immediately after the tribulation of those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers that are in heaven shall be moved. There shall be signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars, and upon the earth distress of nations, by reason of the confusion of the roaring of the sea and of the waves, men withering away for fear, and expectation of what shall come upon the whole world. For the powers of heaven shall be moved. And then shall appear the sign of the Son

of Man in heaven, and then shall all tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty. And He shall send His angels with a trumpet and a great voice, and shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.' We understand this passage thus. There is to be great tribulation in the days before the end. They are called 'those days,'⁴—'those days of which I am thinking,' and thus are distinguished from the subject of the former words, concerning the destruction of Jerusalem. After this tribulation, there will be great signs in the physical world, which are mentioned, sun, moon, stars, the earth, the sea. Nothing less will take place than a movement or shaking of the powers of the heavens. 'Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man,' which many Fathers understand as the Holy Cross. Then shall follow the Second Advent and the Judgment.

The signs here enumerated are interpreted by some ancient commentators in an allegorical sense, but the majority of the Christian writers take them literally. Nothing is so appalling to men as an evident change in the natural course of the universe. They are panic-struck in an earthquake or in a terrible storm at sea, for they feel themselves absolutely without help at the mercy of unknown forces from which they cannot fly. At the end of the world, as seems very probable from the progress of that incomplete and partial knowledge of natural phenomena which goes by the name of science, men will have persuaded themselves to believe in nothing but material forces and the supposed unchangeableness of the laws of nature.

⁴ Gr. ἐκείνου.

It will therefore be a great mercy of God, as well as an act of justice, to warn them by those physical forces of the universe around them in which alone they believe. Apart from this, when the sun and moon and stars seem to fail men, there is nothing that they can look for but destruction. We are already aware by experience of elements in the physical constitution of things which are sufficient to warn us that these great catastrophes are perfectly possible. Indeed, convulsions of nature have happened in our own time that might prepare us for anything, though they have not seemed to take the particular form of signs in the sun and moon and stars. The phenomena of which St. Luke speaks, and which are not mentioned by the other Evangelists, 'the confusion of the roaring of the sea,' are probably added by him in order to fill up the picture which was incomplete if the signs in heaven alone are considered.

The whole passage is founded upon previous predictions of the ancient prophets relating to the destruction of Babylon and Egypt, the signs here mentioned having been anticipated more or less, at such destructions, which are considered by the prophets as foreshadowings of this. Isaiah says, 'Behold the day of the Lord shall come, a cruel day and full of indignation and wrath and fury, to lay the land desolate, and to destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and their brightness shall not display their light, the sun shall be darkened in his rising, and the moon shall not shine with her light.'⁵ Ezechiel says of the destruction of Egypt, 'I will cover the heavens when thou shalt be put out, and I will cover the sun with a cloud,

⁵ Isaiah xiii. 9.

and the moon shall not give her light.'⁶ St. Peter, also, in his first speech on the Day of Pentecost, adopts the language of Joel with regard to the latter day, 'And I will show wonders in the heavens above, and signs upon the earth beneath, blood and fire and vapour of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and manifest day of the Lord come.'⁷

In his last Epistle St. Peter gives his own account of the Last Day to his converts. It is by no means a transcript of earlier prophecies, and goes further than our Lord's words in this place. 'Of this one thing be not ignorant, my beloved, that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord delayeth not His promise, as some imagine, but dealeth patiently for your sake, not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance. But the day of the Lord shall

⁶ Ezechiel xxxii. 7.

⁷ It is a mistake to think that St. Peter quotes these verses as having been fulfilled when he spoke—that is, on the Day of Pentecost. He quotes the verses which precede this passage as having been then fulfilled. 'This is that which was spoken of by the Prophet Joel, And it shall come to pass in the Last Day, saith the Lord, I will pour My spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. And upon My servants, indeed, and upon My handmaids will I pour out in those days of My Spirit, and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders,' &c. St. Peter quotes the first verses of the passage as having a fulfilment in what took place on the Day of Pentecost. He completes the quotation, because it is to his purpose to excite compunction in the hearts of his hearers for the murder of our Lord. After speaking of His Resurrection and proving it from Scripture, and also His exaltation to the right hand of God, where he quotes the Psalms which our Lord had put before the Jews in His last question, 'Sit thou on My right hand till I make thy enemies thy footstool,' he adds, 'Therefore let all the house of Israel know most certainly that God hath made both Lord and Christ, this same Jesus Whom you have crucified.' The burden of his exhortation is summed up at the end, 'Save yourselves from this perverse generation.'

comes as a thief'—here St. Peter evidently remembers our Lord's expression—'in which the heavens shall pass away with great violence, and the elements shall be melted with heat, and the earth and the works that are in it shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things are to be destroyed, what manner of people ought you to be in holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of the Lord, by which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with the burning heat?'⁸

This prophecy of St. Peter's may be considered as adding some lines, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, to the picture already drawn by our Lord for the prophets. In the same way we find St. Paul adding many details to the prophecy as it had been before him, especially with relation to the Man of Sin.⁹ The Christians to whom St. Paul wrote were very new converts, and it seems wonderful that they should have been so instructed almost at the very outset in these matters, although, what is not surprising, they were imperfect in their knowledge, and St. Paul thought it worth while to write his second Epistle almost for the sole purpose of setting them right. It is remarkable how our Lord leaves out this part of the picture of the Last Day. He said, indeed, to the Jews, 'I am come in the name of My Father, and you receive Me not; if another shall come in his own name him you will receive'¹⁰—words which are understood in the Church as a prophecy of the reception of Antichrist by the Jews. But He has left to others to describe the wicked one, 'whom the Lord Jesus shall kill with the spirit of His mouth and

⁸ 2 St. Peter iii. 8—12.

⁹ 2 Thess. ii. 3.

¹⁰ St. John v. 43.

shall destroy with the brightness of His coming, him whose cunning is according to the working of Satan, in all power and signs and lying wonders, and in all seduction of iniquity to them that perish, because they received not this love of the truth that they may be saved.'

'But when these things begin to come to pass, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is at hand.' There are expressions in this part of the prophecy which may seem to refer equally well to either of the two great future events with which the prediction is concerned, that is, either the destruction of Jerusalem, or the coming of our Lord at the end of the world. In the years that preceded the destruction of the city, the Christians had suffered very much from the persecuting fury of the Jews, and the overthrow of the Jewish polity was really a day of deliverance and redemption to them. They might, therefore, be told to hail the signs which heralded in the calamities of Jerusalem as signs, in that sense, of a welcome breathing-time for themselves. Again, at the end of the world, there could be no doubt that all the prophetic anticipations concur in describing the Church as suffering more terribly than ever from the persecution of Antichrist, which, it is thought, will be more severe, although shorter, than any former persecution. So it would be in accordance with our Lord's gentle and loving character to bid the Church in either case take these signs of destruction, either of the city or of the world, as the signs of coming summer. He is not content with saying that it shall be so. He bids His children lift up their heads, and, not exactly rejoice over the destruction of the enemies of God and of the Church, but give thanks for the approach of what He calls

their redemption. The exhortation may fit either time. Of course, the redemption would be greater—the deliverance from more intolerable evil—and the goods which will then be close at hand far more magnificent as well as eternal, in the latter case than in the former.

If, however, we are to take the sentence before us as an immediate connection with those which it follows, there can be no doubt that it refers to the final deliverance which will be brought about by the Day of Judgment. And it is in harmony with the tone of feeling with respect to the Last Day, which shows itself in the New Testament, that that Last Day should be commonly looked forward to by Christians with great desire and hope, and a joyful longing and confidence. This runs through the passages in the Epistles where there is allusion to the end of the world, and where people long with so much joy and hope for any future event, the signs of its approach are hailed with just that kind of feeling which our Lord enjoins. It seems reasonable, then, to understand the passage as having reference to the Last Day of the world. But there are several intimations in the passage which seem to persuade us to understand the words, at all events, in a secondary sense, of the deliverance which followed on the removal of the Jewish nation.

‘And from the fig-tree learn the parable,’ that is, the parable that the fig-tree has to teach you. ‘When the branch thereof is now tender, and the leaves are come forth, you know that summer is nigh. See the fig-tree and all trees; when they now shoot forth their fruit, you know that summer is nigh. To you also, when you shall see all these things come to pass, know that the Kingdom of God is at hand,

know that it is very nigh, even at the doors.' The parable is very plain, and probably, at the time when our Lord spoke, although we know that the time was not yet come for the figs to be ripe on the trees, yet the slopes of Mount Olivet were clothed with the fresh verdure and foliage of the spring, and summer was near at hand. It was our Lord's way, as has often been remarked, to use the scenes before His eyes as the illustration of what He was teaching. He meant, we may suppose, to carry on the bright hopeful thoughts which He had just put into words, about lifting up their heads, and the rest, and bid them hail the signs which precede, either the chastisement of the nation or the judgment of the world, as the first signs of the early summer are hailed by those who value its gifts. The signs are terrible in themselves, but to Christians they are like the shooting of the fig-tree and all the trees which they see around them.

The spirit of our Lord's language is the same in kind with that which He used in the fields of Samaria. 'Lift up your eyes, and behold the countries, for they are white already unto harvest.'¹¹ It may be remarked, too, that there seems here a tacit allusion to another fact which it is supposed will mark the Latter Days—that of the conversion of the Jews. For He had spoken some months before this time of the fig-tree, the owner of which had sought figs but in vain for three successive years, and had been persuaded to wait yet a little while longer and give it another chance before it was cut down. And then, only two days before He had cursed the fig-tree in the valley below because it had no fruit to yield Him, although it was not the time for figs. We have considered

¹¹ St. John iv. 36.

that both the parable and the incident of the cursing of the fig-tree refer to the same truth, that of the unfruitfulness of the Synagogue and that of its subsequent barrenness inflicted on it as a punishment. It had borne no fruit to God, and therefore its power of fruit-bearing was taken away.

And now our Lord tells us something further, that one of the signs of the coming of the end of the world is to be the 'fruitfulness of the fig-tree,' that is, the return of the apostate nation to the true faith, and of the 'fathers to the children, and the incredulous to the wisdom of the just,' as holy Zachary says, and this to come about just before the end by the preaching of Elias. If this way of understanding the parable be correct, as it is certainly not objectionable, the choice of the fig-tree here for the illustration in the parable becomes very intelligible. Our Lord, as we have seen, has already shown that He had the future conversion of the chosen people in His Heart, by the words with which He closed the sentence of desolation against the Temple. They were not to see Him again, until the time when they were to say, 'Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord,' that is, till they received Him as their Messiah. The fruit-bearing of the fig-tree, if the meaning of the parable, and of the symbolical action by which the tree was cursed, is carried on, means the return of the nation, the fathers to the children, the children to the fathers, and that is to be one sure sign that the Kingdom of God is at hand, and the long battle of the Church on earth is nearly accomplished. Then, indeed, Christians may lift up their heads, for, as St. Paul says to the Romans, 'If the loss of them,' the Jews, 'be the reconciliation of

the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?'¹²

'Amen I say to you, that this generation shall not pass till all these things be done. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.'¹³ These words must be understood according to the principles which have guided us in the whole commentary on the prophecy before us. That is, they are to be understood as being verified with regard to both the great events which are the subject of the prophecy, though, in a less full sense, as to the one than of the other. The meaning of the phrase 'this generation' is twofold. It may mean the generation to which our Lord spoke, and then they would be verified if, according to the common way of speaking, these great wonders, preceded by their respective signs, came about in the lifetime of the men who were alive when our Lord spoke. In this sense the words refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, and there is no difficulty about taking them in their literal meaning. In the other sense they refer to the great catastrophe of the end of the world by the Day of Judgment. In this sense the words 'this generation' must mean this present period of the life of the human race, the last epoch of which is that in which we live, which began at the time of the first coming of our Lord, and is to be finished by His second coming. The use of this word in the New Testament seems to show that it seldom has this last signification.

¹² Rom. xi. 15.

¹³ The reader of the original Greek should carefully notice the distinction which seems to be made in the language of this and the closely following passage about the Day of Judgment. ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ὅτι μετὰ παρόλθῃ τῇ γενεᾷ αὕτη ἕως ἂν πάντα ταῦτα γένηται . . . περὶ δὲ τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης καὶ τῆς ὥρας οὐδεὶς οἶδεν, κ.τ.λ. (St. Matt. xxiv. 34, 36).

It seems better to understand it in the former sense, and to suppose our Lord to speak of the fulfilment of the signs which shall precede the destruction of Jerusalem before the end of the generation in which He suffered. 'Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.' The words seem to signify what is said in the Sermon on the Mount, 'Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall not pass from the law till all be fulfilled.'¹⁴ And in St. Luke 'It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.' That is, certain things may be liable to alteration or postponement in the order of Providence, in our way of understanding, as for instance, the decree that had been pronounced by Jonas for the destruction of Ninive, or certain promises of God which have been made under a given condition. But this decree of the destruction of Jerusalem for the sins of the people is a decree which cannot be altered, any more than the fulfilment of the law. Our Lord's words imply more than this, for they speak positively, and are understood as a prophecy, not only of the destruction of Jerusalem or of the end of the world, but also of the new heavens and new earth, which are to succeed, according to the prophecy of Isaias and St. John, and to which St. Peter refers in his Epistle, where, after speaking of the destruction of the world, he says, 'We look for new heavens and a new earth, *according to His promises*, in which justice dwelleth.'¹⁵ But the direct intention of the passage seems to be to assure the disciples solemnly of the certainty and infallible fulfilment of His words.

¹⁴ St. Matt. v. 18 ; St. Luke xvi. 17.

¹⁵ 2 St. Peter iii. 13.

Our Lord goes on, as St. Luke tells us, 'And take heed to yourselves, lest perhaps your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly. For as a snare shall it come upon all that sit upon the face of the earth. Watch ye, therefore, praying at all times, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that are to come, and to stand before the Son of Man.' These words are capable of application to the earlier subject of the prophecy, the days before the catastrophe of Jerusalem. But it is not necessary to refer them to it. For at the point which we have now reached we may consider that our Lord is principally occupied, as it seems, in preparing the minds of the faithful for the Last Day, and in urging them by one consideration after another to keep themselves in a state of readiness for the coming of the Judge. It has already been said that there is an obvious reason for this. The Day of Judgment may or may not be far distant, and our Lord expressly discourages anything like prying into the secrets of God in this respect. But the Day of Judgment, considered, not as the end of the world, but as the end of the period of probation to every single soul, is as far off, and no further, from that single soul than the moment of death. Thus the practical matter for each individual soul is to be prepared for the moment of death. If a man die the day before the Day of Judgment, it is the same to him, if he be well prepared, as if he died centuries before that day, and in the same way if a man dies centuries before he is none the better off, if he die unprepared, than if he were to be living up to the Day of Judgment. We find it difficult to persuade ourselves of this

truth, at the same time that it is a truth which it would be most unreasonable to question. The reason why we find it so difficult to realize is the occupation of our minds by temporal and worldly matters which meet the senses. We have, therefore, always need of our Lord's gracious warning. There is no one who has not need of it and is not perpetually tempted to forget it.

'And take heed to yourselves, lest perhaps your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly. For as a snare shall it come upon all that sit in the face of the whole earth.' Scripture usually describes the Day of Judgment as coming as a thief in the night, or a snare. There is no doubt that the prophecies lead us to expect that the days before the Judgment will be times of great material indulgence, great luxury, forgetfulness of God and of religion. Men will have persuaded themselves that the warnings of conscience are mere fancies, that the existence of anything that is not material is a chimera, that there is no future life, no retribution, for good or evil. It may seem very extraordinary that there are to be so many signs preceding that Great Day, and that yet the majority of men, as far as we can gather from the predictions, are to be so entirely immersed in sensual, or at least sensible, enjoyments. But the explanation may probably be found in two circumstances. The first is that already mentioned, the great prevalence of unbelief in anything but materialism, and the second is the fact which is attested by experience, that at the times of great visitations, plagues, pestilences, famines, and the like, there is always a recklessness and despair developed among certain minds which

draws them to excess in the temporal pleasures in which alone they believe, in the spirit of the saying which St. Paul quotes when he says, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.' This is quite in accordance with the passage from the Book of Wisdom which has already been quoted in a recent chapter. The one security for readiness, whether for the day of death, or the Day of Judgment, is that which our Lord gives—'Watch ye therefore, praying at all times, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that are to come, and to stand before the Son of Man.'

It may seem surprising that our Lord should warn His Apostles, and through them His faithful children in all ages of the Church, against the particular faults which are here mentioned, as if the servants of God were likely to fall into 'surfeiting and drunkenness,' and cares of life. It may be said, however, that the warning, being general, was necessarily put in such a form as to embrace all, and that the majority of Christians might be expected to be liable to such temptations, if the Apostles were not. It is also true that an excess of indulgence in eating and drinking, and much more, in devotion to secular cares, may be very ruinous indeed to spiritual men. But the real answer seems to be found in the danger of these indulgences, even when they are not great, as benumbing the life of the soul, and making it capable of the greatest falls into vices of all kinds for all sorts of people. The word which is translated 'surfeiting' (*crápula*)¹⁶ seems to mean the effects of over-eating in heaviness and depression. It may be taken that our Lord means not so much to stigmatize vicious excess, as to put us on our guard against the

¹⁶ κραπίδα.

effects of plentiful food and good cheer in unfitting us for the work we have to do and the dangers we have to meet.

Heedlessness as to the conditions under which we live in this world, with all the great issues of the future dependent upon us, is to many the greatest danger of all. A life without privation, without check on the un sinful feeding ourselves on the good things of this world, is not uncommon in Christians who do not care to aim higher than the avoidance of what is a breach of the Commandments, and is a sign of a state of soul that is unprovided for great trials and emergencies. Little more is needed to lull the soul to sleep. People ask, 'Is it wrong?' and they are told it is not wrong. But they do not ask whether it is the kind of life which leaves the soul free to think of Heaven and provide for the Judgment Day, to be ready for death, and practise virtue under very possible trials and dangers. St. Peter says, 'Seeing then that all these things are to be dissolved, what manner of people ought you to be in holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting to the coming of the day of the Lord, by which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with the burning heat.'

People who are looking forward to such things are not likely, if they are Christians, to be 'too full of meat.' Again, there may be a great deal more than is apparent in the caution against 'drunkenness.' Few people who profess to be serving God are likely to give way to drunkenness, for if they are not above so degrading a vice, they are not fit even to profess to serve Him. But there are different and manifold kinds of the habit of intoxication beyond that which commonly goes by the name. We speak of men

being intoxicated with pleasure, or ambition, or pride, and so with other bad principles, and our language is accurate, because it is as easy to lose our reasonable control over ourselves in such ways as in the more vulgar form of drinking. Any exciting pursuit which is indulged to excess may result in intoxication. People are drunk with novel-reading, if the thoughts put into their heads by works of fiction fill their minds day and night, come in to prevent them from praying, if the pursuit occupies too much time, and interferes with and unfits them for their duties. The same may be said of a score of other ways of enjoyment which are not so absolutely wrong as to be forbidden by any law of God, but which are often as ruinous to souls as if they were breaches of the Decalogue. Such are dancing, card-playing, and the thousand pursuits with which gambling is mixed up; such is the love of money, such are sometimes politics, or success in conversation or literature—in short, any amusement or employment which becomes an end to the soul, instead of being a means to the service of God. The Scripture speaks of the love of money as idolatry, because it puts money before the heart as its god. The heart is infinitely foolish, and liable to be entangled in sensible and temporal things, and this is the same thing as to say that it is liable to a sense of intoxication. No wonder, therefore, that our Lord with the dangers of the last days, and, indeed, of all days, before Him, should warn even Apostolic men to ‘take heed’ that their hearts be not overcharged.

It is quite easy to understand how the effect against which He warns them may be produced by what He calls ‘the cares of life.’ He does not mean

cares that are evil in themselves. But the danger to most men, and certainly to many good men, is from cares which seem to them to be necessary, and which are greatly engrossing. The seed in the parable fell among the thorns, as well as by the wayside and on the rocky ground, and as our Lord said, the 'cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches' choked it, and it became unfruitful. He seems to tell us that we are all in a condition of danger and warfare, in which many privations that would not otherwise be necessary must be embraced, in which there must be much self-denial and mortification, lest the day come upon us unawares when there will be no time to make our preparation. Our condition is such that we require to be able to watch and pray continually, and the reward of our faithfulness to the requirements of this condition is that we shall be able to stand before the Son of Man in the Day of Judgment. But when watchfulness and prayer are required, there must of necessity be a life above the world, even if the vocation in which we find ourselves does not take us out of the world materially. The habits against which He warns us are chiefly those in which watchfulness and prayer are either impaired or made impossible. Our spiritual exercises are the food of the soul. If the body is deprived of its food, health and strength are impossible. But the body does not more certainly languish when its food is either denied it or is cut short, than does the soul when those exercises are made impossible on which its life and vigour depend. Let us once be awakened to the state of things around us, the danger of sloth and spiritual slumber, the necessity of prayer and mortification and of the fruitful use of the means of grace, if we would

escape the dreadful dangers hanging over our life, and then we shall have no difficulty in understanding why so many warnings are given us against worldly cares, and what our Lord means by 'surfeiting and drunkenness.'

St. Matthew and St. Mark here add some remarkable words concerning the great day of the doom of the world. 'But of that day and hour knoweth no man, neither the angels in Heaven, nor the Son, but the Father.' These words seem to have been spoken by our Blessed Lord as an answer to the question about the time of His coming again. It is a question which people are always asking, for the innate curiosity of the human mind naturally manifests itself about such things as are future, and especially future things of the greatest importance. Our Lord is always forbidding and mortifying this curiosity, for it is an intrusion into the things of God, and it would also be a great calamity and injury to us to have the knowledge for which it craves. We can partly understand the reason why that great day is kept hidden, though there may be many reasons for it which we cannot fathom. Our Lord certainly discourages in the most peremptory way all curiosity on this point.

There is therefore no difficulty about the meaning of the passage, although there may be a question about the statement in the text of St. Mark, in which the Son is added to the number of those who do not know the Day of Judgment. The knowledge of our Lord may be either Divine or human, what He knows as God, and what He knows by infused knowledge as Man, as well as the natural knowledge, such as that of experience, which He has, and which might be His even if He were not a Divine

Person. As God He must know all things, for the Divine Nature and all that belongs to It, power, wisdom, and the rest, is the same and one in each of the Three Divine Persons. These words therefore cannot apply to Him as God, and whenever anything that belongs to the Divine Nature is spoken of in Scripture as belonging to any one of the Three, it is not meant that it does not also belong to the other two. We are surprised sometimes by passages like that of St. Matthew, 'No one knoweth the Son but the Father, neither doth any man know the Father, but the Son, and he to whom it shall please the Son to reveal Him.'¹⁷ These words seem to deny that the Holy Ghost knows either the Father or the Son, but the language of Scripture about the Divine Persons is only to be understood according to the rule just now mentioned. It is certain, therefore, that the Divine knowledge of our Lord as to the future things, and therefore of the Day of Judgment, is one and the same with that of the Father.

It remains therefore to find how it is that the Son can be said not to know the Day of Judgment as Man. It is commonly taught that as Man He has infused knowledge of everything, and therefore of the Day of Judgment. But in speaking of Himself He often uses language which, if carelessly understood, would represent Him as knowing or of speaking nothing of Himself. Thus He says in His dispute with the Jews after the miracle at the Probatic Pool, 'The Son cannot do anything of Himself, but what He seeth the Father doing, for what things soever He doth these the Son also doth in like manner. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things which He Himself doth,

¹⁷ St. Matt. xi. 27.

and greater works than these will He show Him, that ye may wonder. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and giveth life, so also the Son giveth life to whom He will. . . . I cannot of Myself do anything, as I hear, I judge, and My judgment is just because I seek not My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.' This passage, and others of the same kind, are understood of our Lord even as God, because He receives the Divine Nature, and with it all knowledge and power, from the Father. In this sense He might have said that even as God He did not know the Day of Judgment, that is, as it is said He can do nothing of Himself, and so know nothing of Himself, because that power and knowledge would be His as having been received from the Father, although they are the same power and knowledge which is in the Father. Further, there are certain matters which belong to each of the Divine Persons by appropriation, as it is called, Providence to the Father, Redemption to the Son, Sanctification to the Holy Ghost. Thus in the sense in which it might be said that the Father did not redeem us, it might be said of the Son that He did not know the Day of Judgment, because that Day belongs to the Providence and Predestination which is attributed to the Father, although belonging alike to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

The infused knowledge possessed by our Lord as Man may be divided under two heads. There is that which He had generally, and that which He had for the particular purpose of His Mission, to teach and inform us. In something of this way He said that to sit on His right hand and on His left was not His to give, that is, it did not belong to His office as the Messenger of God to give it. With regard to the

Day of Judgment, He might know it by this infused knowledge as well as by His Divine knowledge, and yet it might not be one of the truths which He was commissioned to reveal. On the contrary, it may have been an especial intention of His Mission that it should be kept a secret from all. Many things belonging to that Mission it may have been intended that He should make known in due time, other things it may have been determined that He should not make known, and yet He said afterwards, 'All things whatsoever I have heard of My Father I have made known to you.'¹⁸ In this sense, our Lord may have said that He did not know the day, that is, there was a sense in which He did not know it so as to reveal it, for it may have been in the Divine counsels that the knowledge He had of it was outside the range of what He had to reveal. Now, the words spoken by Him were with reference to the question of revelation to others, and in that sense He did not know the day. This seems to be the most natural way of understanding the passage.

'And as in the days of Noe, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the Flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, even till that day in which Noe entered into the ark, and they knew not till the Flood came, and took them all away, so also shall the coming of the Son of Man be. Then two shall be in the field, one shall be taken and one shall be left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill, one shall be taken and one shall be left. Watch ye, therefore, because ye know not what hour your Lord will come.'

This comparison of the days just before the end

¹⁸ St. John xiv. 15.

of the world to the days before the Flood has been already made by our Lord at the time when He spoke to the Pharisees of the coming of the Kingdom of God.¹⁹ In that former passage He added the days in Sodom before the destruction of the Cities of the Plain. The picture is one of thoughtless and fearless enjoyment. But we cannot doubt that there were many signs beforehand of the coming catastrophe, and, moreover, the ark was a hundred years in building, and Noe was probably a preacher as well as an example of penance. The life of pleasure and heedlessness went on to the very day, He tells us, when Noe entered into the ark, and this is the pattern which will be followed by the majority of men before the Last Day. That is one feature of the picture. Another is, the mixture between the good and the evil, side by side, in the same place and occupation; two in the field, one taken, one left, two grinding at the mill, one taken, the other left. The taking and leaving has reference to the gathering together of the saints of God by the holy angels. Those that are left are those who are to be destroyed.

‘But this know ye, that if the good man of the house knew at what hour the thief would come, he would certainly watch, and would not suffer his house to be broken open. Wherefore be ye also ready, because at what hour you know not the Son of Man will come.’ We find an echo of these words, or rather of the substance of the teaching which they convey, in the first Epistle to the Thessalonians, written, as we have said, to some very recent converts. ‘Of the times and seasons, brethren, you need not that we should write unto you. For your-

¹⁹ St. Luke xvii. 26.

selves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord shall so come as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, peace and security, then shall sudden destruction come upon them, as the pains upon her that is with child, and they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day overtake you as a thief. For all you are the children of light and the children of the day, we are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night, and they that are drunk, are drunk in the night. But let us who are of the day, be sober, having on the breastplate of faith and charity, and for a helmet, the hope of salvation.’²⁰

The sense of St. Paul is easily seen, but it is not fully drawn out, as the parable or image is not completed. The good man of the house does not wish his house to be broken open, and in order to prevent this, he watches, because he does not know when the thief may come. The thief, on the other hand, seeks to find a time when the master of the house is not watching. Our Lord is coming to us, in an hour which we do not know. He does not come to us with any intention of plunder or injury, but it will be to our ineffable loss if He comes, not at a time which we know not, for this is inevitable, but at a time when we are not prepared, which will be fatal. We are therefore to watch, and not let our house be broken into, by which He means that we are not to be taken unawares. Our house is to be open to our Lord, and to welcome Him with joy and thankfulness. His coming is to be as the day of deliverance, long expected and anxiously watched

²⁰ 1 Thess. v. 1—8.

for. In order to secure this, we are to live, as St. Paul says, as children of light, and of the day. The Apostle draws out the conclusion which will produce the disposition and the practice which becomes Christians, and in so doing he explains and comments on our Lord's words. He seems to bid us not let those words come true in our case.

A few words which St. Mark has added to the declaration of our Lord about the hiddenness of the Last Day, seem to carry on and explain St. Matthew's words of which we have just been speaking, and which are omitted by St. Mark. No one knows, our Lord has said, the appointed day. 'Take ye heed, watch and pray, for ye know not when the time is.' And he gives another image instead of that of the good man of the house who will not let it be broken into. 'Even as a man who, going into a far country, left his house, and gave authority to his servants over every work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye, therefore, for ye know not when the lord of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning, lest coming on a sudden, he find you sleeping.' This instruction, and, indeed, almost all that is contained in these paragraphs of the two first Evangelists, is a repetition of warnings which were also given by our Lord at an earlier time, and several of them are found in St. Luke's account of our Lord's teaching in Judæa.²¹

In this passage of St. Luke,²² the image is different, for the servants there are waiting for the return of their lord from a wedding. 'Let your loins be girt,

²¹ See *The Preaching of the Cross*, Part II.; *Public Life of our Lord*, vol. x.; *Story of the Gospels*, § 107.

²² St. Luke xii.

and lamps burning in your hands, and you yourselves like to men who wait for their lord, when he shall return from the wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh they may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching. Amen, I say unto you, that He will gird Himself, and make them sit down to meat, and passing will minister unto them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.' And then St. Luke follows on with a paragraph about the householder and the thief, and the house being broken open. The teaching of these passages is quite the same, but the words and phrases are varied by our Lord in beautiful accordance with the different occasions on which the several instructions were given. Of course on the present occasion, which was our Lord's last teaching before the Passion, when He had been speaking so solemnly of the Last Day and its surprises, everything He said was in a tone more grave and severe than before. And it is interesting to trace how He has partly repeated and partly expanded His former teaching, for the Parable of the Ten Virgins, of which we shall presently have to speak, is implicitly contained in the few words used at the time of which St. Luke is speaking, about the men with their loins girded and lamps burning in their hands, and the waiting of servants for their lord when he will return from the wedding. The passage before us says nothing about this image, but it seems to suggest the parable in the last words, 'Lest coming on a sudden, he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch!'

Something of the same kind must be said of the

passage which immediately follows on that which we have last quoted from St. Matthew. 'Who, thinkest thou, is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath appointed over his family, to give them meat in season? Blessed is that servant whom, when his lord shall come, he shall find so doing. Amen I say to you, he shall place him over all his goods. But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord is long a coming, and shall begin to strike his fellow-servants, and shall eat and drink with the drunkards, the lord of that servant shall come in a day that he hopeth not, and at an hour when he knoweth not, and shall separate him, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' This passage is to the same purpose with another which is also among St. Luke's anticipations, and follows immediately after another of the same kind with that which we have just quoted from St. Mark.

In the other account, given by St. Luke, our Lord is speaking in answer to the question of St. Peter.²³ 'And Peter said to Him, Lord, dost Thou speak this parable to us, or likewise to all? And the Lord said, Who, thinkest thou, is the faithful and wise steward, whom his lord setteth over his family, to give them their measure of wheat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, he will set him over all that he possesseth. But if that servant shall say in his heart, My lord is long a coming, and shall begin to strike the men-servants and the maid-servants, and eat and drink, and be drunk, the lord of that servant will come in the day that he hopeth not, and at the hour that he knoweth not, and shall

²³ St. Luke xii. 41.

separate him, and appoint him his portion with unbelievers. And that servant who knew the will of his lord and prepared not himself, and did not according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes, but he that knew not and did not according to his will, shall be beaten with few stripes. But unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be required much, and to whom they have committed much, of him they will demand the more.'

There is so much resemblance between these two passages, that we may easily understand how some commentators have supposed them to have been spoken but once. But the true principle to follow in such cases is first to see whether there is anything against the supposition that our Lord spoke the words on more occasions than one, then to consider whether it is quite respectful to the Evangelists, and to the Divine author and arranger of the Gospels which He inspired them to write, to consider that they had no reason for putting them at different times, and that they were either mistaken or careless in so putting them. The words are obviously in perfect harmony with the context, and the occasion to which they are attributed by each Evangelist. They are words relating to a most important practical matter, and it is far more probable that our Lord uttered them innumerable times in the course of His preaching, than that He uttered them only once. The slight discrepancies between the two reports are not unimportant, and the best way of accounting for them is to suppose the report in each case given as what our Lord actually said. The difference between the occasions are not slight, for St. Luke clearly reports what was spoken to the multitude of disciples, St. Matthew what was spoken

to the Apostles alone, if not to four of them only. In St. Luke, St. Peter puts the question, 'Lord, dost Thou speak the parable to us, or likewise to all?' In St. Matthew the question, which would have been superfluous, is omitted, but the words used are such as to awaken in the minds the memory of the question of St. Peter. The passage which is added in St. Luke about the different chastisements of the greater and lesser offenders is in itself a very important element in the teaching, but it is easy to suppose that it was not added in the discourse on Mount Olivet, because the Parable of the Talents was to follow, in which the doctrine of the difference of retribution is set forth.

We shall speak presently of this and the other great parables with which this discourse, as it seems, concluded, and we shall have to point out their relation to former utterances of our Lord. That our Lord constantly repeated in one place and at one time what He had said elsewhere and at another time, must be self-evident to any careful and reverent student of the Gospels, as it is also the only rational hypothesis under the circumstances. But we gain greatly by having these instances of repetition given us by the Evangelists, as they often shed a new light upon the doctrine itself. The parables which follow at the end of this great discourse will illustrate this. That of the Ten Virgins seems to grow out of the former words about 'loins girded and lamps burning;' that of the Talents has reference, as has been said, to the doctrine of retribution. The last of all, deals, if we are not mistaken, with a subject not unconnected with St. Peter's question in St. Luke.

CHAPTER XV.

The Last Parables.

St. Matt. xxv. 1—46 ; *Story of the Gospels*, §§ 146—148.

AT the close of the great prophecy on the Mount of Olives, St. Matthew gives us the three last parables of our Blessed Lord. It seems as if he meant us to understand that they were delivered at the same time and to the same small knot of the disciples as the rest of the discourse which they follow. This may not be absolutely certain, on account of the method in which the first Evangelist frequently arranges his matter. But there can be no difficulty as to taking it to have been so, and we may even think that none but the four disciples, at whose request the prophecy was given, were the hearers of these parables. In that case we may feel tolerably sure that our Lord did not mean them to be kept secret. They are obviously most useful to all, as enforcing with fresh earnestness many lessons which had already been given by Him, and it is natural to think that they soon became the property of all the Christian community, especially of the early Church of Jerusalem. There is no injunction to the Apostles to keep the details of the prophecy, and the discourse which accompanied it, to themselves. Nor were they restrained by any motives of prudence or reserve from communicating this teaching, which in so many ways sums up other instructions of the same kind, at

the same time that it carries them further, and throws over them the light of a solemn prophetic pronouncement. They come in very naturally as the termination of the teaching of our Lord in this kind, and they seem to belong to the prophecy in another way also, which is not so clear as to the other parables, in being not only full of generally important teaching, but also as having reference in particular to the state of the world as the Day of Judgment draws near. All former similar teaching of our Lord implied that the state of the world, as to its preparation for the Judgment, was likely to be what was described. In this our Lord directly tells us that so it will be. If these parables had been delivered at another time, and placed here only because, for some reason or other, they had been passed over in their natural place, they would not suit the train of our Lord's thoughts at the very last, so well as they suit it in the place in which we now read them.

In this last discourse on the Mount of Olives our Lord seems to be exercising more especially and authoritatively than elsewhere the office of Prophet. He exercises it in a somewhat different manner from that which had been common to the prophets of the Old Testament. In the first place, as has been already remarked, He spoke with a clear and precise knowledge of the events which He predicted which was entirely His own. Certainly there was no lack of accuracy in the foreknowledge of the ancient prophets as to the matters which they were commissioned to foretell. But they were without that complete exhaustive knowledge of the whole plan of the future, as it lay before the mind of our Lord, from which the predictions of this great discourse

flow. The prophets paint with perfect truth, each one portion or feature of a great picture. But our Lord had the whole picture before Him, and all its several features or portions, as clearly as the whole, and their relations to the whole and to one another. Thus there is about the prophecy of which we have been speaking a comprehensiveness, as well as an exactness of detail, which belong to it alone among the Scriptural prophecies.

The predictions which it contains embrace the whole time from the epoch of its delivery to the end of the world, setting before us, in great and massive outlines, what our Lord wishes us to know concerning the future. It has also an eminently practical import all through, giving even the details which may have to be attended to in particular emergencies, as when He provides so carefully for the safety of the Christians at the time of their flight from Jerusalem, as well as the more general instructions as to watchfulness, which are meant for all times till the Day of Judgment comes. There is a tenderness and forethought about the whole which reveal the truth that it comes directly from the Heart of the Good Shepherd, although He has to speak of things which must have been most painful to that Sacred Heart, as the dissensions among Christians, their lukewarmness, and the falling away of so many. If we do not mistake the character of the parables of which we are now to speak, they also are marked by this same feature of tenderness, although they set forth the dreadful truths of the rejection of many among His chosen servants, and the final doom of the wicked as well as the endless rewards which await the just at His hands. There is an air of calm and sweetness about the whole, and at the last our Lord speaks

with the tone of majesty which naturally belongs to Him as the Judge of the whole race of mankind assembled before His throne, to receive each one his appointed doom from which there is no appeal.

The three great parables of which we are to speak are remarkable in this also that two of them are more or less repetitions of teachings of the same kind which have been given before, though they are here, as we shall see, modified by some touches which give them a character of novelty. It is as if our Lord had chosen these three special parts of His former teaching, to give them the character of predictions, and to give them, also, the impressiveness of being His last predictions. For the image of the 'lamps burning,' which is used in the first, that of the Ten Virgins, is taken from some former instructions as to watchfulness, and the Parable of the Talents is founded on the similar Parable of the Pounds which our Lord had delivered not many days before, just before His arrival at Jerusalem. The great 'parable' which concludes the series is hardly a parable at all in the formal sense, and has all the more weight for us because it is so little of an ordinary parable. But it may be treated as such, and it is probably meant to be so treated by our Lord, inasmuch as although it belongs to the prophecy, as giving the conditions under which the sentences of the Last Judgment will be pronounced by Him, the form in which the prediction is cast is clearly parabolical. That is, it seems that the few words which contain the reason of the sentence in each case, which is the practice or the neglect of corporal works of mercy, is meant to represent the principle of all good works and merits of whatever kind for which men will be rewarded, or all

evil works of whatever kind for which they will be doomed to punishment. We shall see that there is a growth of the doctrine of the conditions of acceptance or rejection at the Last Day as the parables succeed in order, and our Lord probably meant them to form a continuous whole, and to be understood as such. We shall therefore take the three together, as containing the same doctrine of the conditions of salvation at the Day of Judgment.

The first of these great parables, as has been said, is that of the Ten Virgins. It is, like the others, cast in the form of a prediction. 'Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be like to ten virgins.' This form is not always used, and when it is used, we may understand that our Lord means to describe prophetically what shall be. 'Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened unto ten virgins, who taking their lamps, went out to meet the bridegroom and the bride. And five of them were foolish, and five wise.' The word used for 'wise' means prudent, thoughtful, careful. The other word quite answers to our word 'foolish.' 'But the five foolish, having taken their lamps, did not take oil with them. But the wise took oil in their vessels with the lamps. And the bridegroom tarrying, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out. The wise answered, saying, Lest perhaps there be not enough for us and for you, go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And whilst they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and they that were ready,

went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut. But at last came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answering, said, Amen I say to you, I know you not. Watch ye therefore, because you know not the hour.'

We need not linger long over the details of the parable. The Eastern marriages were celebrated at night, and there seems to have been two processions, one of the friends of the bridegroom, the 'children of the bride-chamber,' as they are called by our Lord, who accompanied the bridegroom to the house of the bride, the other of the girl friends of the bride, who awaited her arrival, or met her at some spot between her old home and her new home, and then entered in with their lamps lighted, to join in the banquet, which was the public part of the solemnity. That is enough to make the teaching of our Lord intelligible. For this purpose it is necessary that there should be uncertainty as to the moment at which the bride and bridegroom would arrive, that on the occasion of this wedding the time should have been long, that in consequence of the delay, the virgins, tired with waiting, should have fallen asleep, and that if their lamps had been burning before, the oil in them should have been exhausted. Then came the sudden cry at midnight, 'Behold the bridegroom cometh,' the call to go forth and the trimming the lamps, which revealed the difference between the wise and the foolish virgins. It was their place now to receive the bride, and enter with her into the bridegroom's house. Their lamps required a supply of oil, with which the prudent had furnished themselves, the heedless had not. The lamps of the wise burn brightly, those of the heedless are either already extinguished, or are on the point of extinction.

The application made by the foolish to the prudent virgins, and the answer made by the prudent to the foolish, may be merely an accompanying circumstance in the picture, giving it more force and life. But it is natural to take it as representing to us the great vital truth, that though we are to love our neighbour as ourselves, we are not to love him more than ourselves and against the interests of our own souls. The order of charity and our duty to God require that nothing must be put before our own salvation, which is His affair as well as ours. We may also understand it as representing the truth that the oil in the lamp which is fit for the wedding to which our Lord invites us is a grace inherent in each individual soul by itself, and which cannot be supplied by the charity of others, however holy, although the offer of it may be won by their prayers. Not even the sacraments of the Church can save a soul that is averse from God by the want of the dispositions necessary to salvation, to which therefore even the merits of our Lord cannot be applied. The rejection of such souls is very gently represented in the parable by the words of the bridegroom. 'I know you not,' that is, there is nothing in you that I can acknowledge as belonging to me. The remonstrance which was made by the foolish virgins in the parable, again, has been thought by some to be a circumstance which is added to complete the picture. It corresponds, in any case, to similar features in other instructions of our Lord, such as that in the Sermon on the Mount, 'Many will say to Me on that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name cast out devils, and done many wonderful works in Thy name? And then I will profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from Me, all you that work

iniquity.' It is most probable that our Lord here speaks of the truth which will flash on the minds of all those who are rejected in the Day of Judgment, rather than of any spoken words in which that truth is expressed. Both passages express the awakening of the consciences, whether of the false teachers and heretics in the Sermon on the Mount, or of the virgins here, to the self-deception under which they have fallen, whether it has been that there will be time to prepare themselves for the Day of Judgment when it has once come, or that those who disobey our Lord as to the doctrines of the faith or the rule of unity can save their souls by any amount of external works for His service. For on that great day, as it seems, all will be at once reduced to silence, and all will acknowledge the perfect justice of the final doom which will then be manifested to the whole world of angels and of men.

We do not forget here the numberless meanings which have been found by Christian writers for almost every single detail of this as of other parables. They are often very beautiful and convey great truths. But our object now is to find the one great lesson which each of these parables conveys with regard to the final Judgment, so that the children of the Church may prepare themselves the better for it. It may not, therefore, be quite necessary to inquire what virtue may be represented by the oil which the wise virgins had and which the foolish virgins had not. It is true that without faith and without charity no soul can stand before our Lord. But it seems that in this parable our Lord is insisting on the need of simple prudence in the affairs of the soul, which would be acknowledged by any one as necessary in a matter of common life. The foolish

virgins are like the man who did not take the pains to put on his 'wedding garment,' for the supper of the King's Son, and they are punished for their heedlessness as he was, and also for a certain want of respect due to the occasion, which was the cause of their heedlessness. No sensible person would run the risk of being unprovided with oil for a wedding procession, and if the occasion was one which called for a special display of devotion and affection, such a feeling would of itself be inconsistent with any neglect which might have been the effect of mere carelessness. Men know well enough what is required to be fit to meet our Lord, and their own conscience is enough in each case to tell them what is wanting, if they have been in the habit of examining it faithfully. In such cases, the conscience is likely to fear even when there is no real ground for fear, and to drive men to prayer and penance and the ordinary means of grace and reconciliation over and over again, and with greater and greater humility and fervour. The 'prudent virgins' are likely enough to fear that there may not be enough oil for themselves, after all their provisions.

It seems, therefore, as has been said, that this parable is a completion of one side of a picture of which our Lord had already drawn the other in His words about vigilance which have been put on record by St. Luke. 'Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching. Amen I say to you, that He will gird Himself, and make them sit down to meat, and passing He will minister to them. And if He shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, blessed are those servants.' The circumstances of the delay of the bridegroom, in the parable before us, and of the

consequent slumber of the virgins, whether prudent or foolish, may, as has been said, be only necessary to the main object of the parable, for the difference between the two classes of souls of which our Lord is speaking required that there should be some circumstance of the kind to bring it out. But some writers have justly remarked that there are intimations in our Lord's language here and elsewhere, which seem intended to prepare us for a truth that there was to be a much longer delay about the Day of Judgment than is commonly expected. We find the Apostles more than once correcting this error in their converts. In truth, the double aspect of the Day of Judgment almost necessitated the misconception, and it was not for Christians to know 'the time and seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power.' If Christians had been commonly taught that the Day of Judgment was far distant, they would have been inclined to trifle with the other truth, that it comes practically to every man at the moment of his death.

We seem to be able to trace some of the effects of this teaching of our Lord in His discourse on the minds of His disciples, in the eager expectation of the Christians of the Apostolic times for the end of the world. It is little loss to them to think it very nigh, unless, as was the case sometimes, this led to some error against the faith, or to some carelessness in practice. The men of our time have fallen into the other and far more pernicious extreme, of thinking that the end of the world will never come, because it has been long delayed. Our Lord would have us be always ready, and it would be more likely that we should be so, if we had the thoughts of the early Christians on the subject of the end of the world

rather than those which are in fashion now. The early Christians were right in their ideas of the shortness of their own time upon earth, of the swift-ness and silence and hiddenness into which the close of each man's probation hurries on—after which, though the world last on for centuries and centuries, there is not a moment in all the course of time in which the false teacher can amend his creed or the foolish virgin furnish herself with oil.

We have said that it does not seem necessary to fix on any one virtue as intended by our Lord by the oil which was necessary for the virgins who were to meet the Bridegroom. The variety of interpretation is here well known, and it is natural that it should be so, for there are many virtues which may be said in different ways to be necessary to the state of grace in which we must be if we are ready to meet our Lord. Faith, as has been said, is necessary, and charity is necessary, and good works are necessary, and purity is necessary, and, under certain circumstances, even heroic virtue may be necessary, as in the case of fortitude in confession of the martyrs, or in other cases some other particular virtue. Certain texts may be quoted for one suggestion or for another, nor need the differences of interpretation frighten us, for there is some good and wholesome lesson to be learnt from all.

If we are to make a choice of one meaning, there is one thing which seems to fit into the use of the image of the lamp kept burning brightly, which has been urged by our Lord elsewhere, as where He says, 'The light of the body is the eye, and that if thy eye be simple thy whole body will be lightsome, but if thy eye be evil thy whole body shall be darksome. If, therefore, the light that is in thee shall be darkness,

how great will the darkness itself be!’ A text like this seems to point to the office of conscience as the guide and light of the whole soul, given us by God as a reflection of the light of His own countenance, as the Psalmist says, *Signatum est super nos lumen vultus tui, Domine*, and which, although it is not an infallible guide, because it may err, yet is placed in the position of an infallible guide to us by Him because, if we obey honestly its guidance, He will never hold us guilty, and in ordinary matters a simple and honest conscience is to be followed as His own law and speaks with His authority. We need not repeat here all that is said in Sacred Scripture about the joy of the conscience or the testimony of a good conscience, to which St. Paul appeals as his security against all the criticisms of men, but we may say surely that whatever special virtue may be necessary in particular cases, or even generally necessary, it is quite certain that where there is a good conscience the oil required by the parable cannot be wanting, and that where there is an evil conscience the lamp of the virgins is without its oil. In this interpretation also we see the fitness of the reply made by the wise virgins to their foolish sisters. For a good conscience is a thing that we cannot secure in others than ourselves, for each one must stand or fall by his own conscience, which he can part with to no one else. If a man take out his eye, and offer it to another, that other cannot see by it. Just so no one can make the conscience of another do the part of his own.

If something of this kind be adopted as the interpretation of this part of the parable, we may see how true it is, and also how simple and easy is the condition which our Lord here requires for admission to that wedding supper of the Lamb which is the

banquet on the eternal goods prepared for His own in Heaven. He says, in truth, nothing more than that all will be tried by their own conscience at the Last Day, and if we look at this statement in the light of our theology it represents to us the general and universal truth that no one is to be lost who has followed his conscience, though, as the foolish virgins were shut out for a fault of omission in not providing themselves with oil, there may be many indeed who have failed to deal rightly with their conscience, by neglecting to inform themselves on matters which affect their salvation, and so have not fed their conscience as those neglect their lamps who do not provide them with oil.

It may seem a truism to say that the one thing required is to keep our 'conscience without offence towards God and man,' and yet St. Paul would hardly have spoken in the way he did of this, as his particular daily exercise of virtue, if it had involved a mere truism.¹ And ordinarily speaking, if we should not rather say universally speaking, the sins of omission in persons who are lost may be more than the sins of commission, and these sins of omission are very largely indeed multiplied by the great omission of all, the cause of thousands of losses, the neglect to examine and care for the conscience. It is this which leads to the perpetration of thousands of sins of commission and sins of ignorance, and to the equally fatal neglect to set right sins which have been committed and which might be repaired by

¹ See Acts xxiv. 16. He describes himself as 'having hope in God which these also themselves look for, that there shall be a resurrection of the just and unjust. And herein do I endeavour to have always a conscience without offence towards God and towards man.' He speaks of the care of his conscience, as a daily preparation for the Last Day, just as is implied in the parable before us.

contrition and confession. So, perhaps, it may turn out at the Last Day that this neglect has been the cause of the ruin of innumerable souls, of a large proportion of the whole number of those to whom our Lord will have to say, 'I know you not.' Yet on the other hand this doctrine ought to be most consoling to the simple faithful children of the Church, both as to their own hopes of salvation and as to the hopes of others, especially those in good faith outside the visible Church. They are to be judged according to the light which has been within their reach, that is, by their own conscience, as well as the children of the Church themselves. The great fear for all must be whether conscience has been carefully heeded, and the warning which our Lord seems to impress upon us is that of the Wise Man, 'With all watchfulness keep thy heart, because life issues out of it.'²

We might have expected in a parable that speaks of those who are called to the wedding supper, and who are described as virgins to go forth with their lamps to meet the bridegroom and the bride, to hear of some conditions of salvation which involve great requirements and the most constant labour in their discharge. Yes, and the requirements of the faithful and those who belong in any especial way to our Lord are very great, and great indeed is the vigilance that is exacted of them because they have more light, and therefore, greater responsibility than others who are less blessed. But our Lord is speaking here as the Judge of all mankind, and He makes the conditions of the Judgment which is to be universal, such that they may apply to every one, whatever may have been his outward circumstances. And we may thus see in the parable

² Prov. iv. 23.

an anticipation of the doctrine of St. Paul to the Romans, about the justice of the judgment of God, 'Who will render to every man according to his works, to them indeed who, according to patience in work, seek glory and honour and incorruption, eternal life, but to them that are contentious and who obey not the truth, but give credit to iniquity, wrath and judgment, indignation, tribulation, and anguish upon every soul of man that worketh evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, but glory and honour and peace to every one who worketh good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no respect of persons with God. For whosoever have sinned without the law shall perish without the law, and whosoever have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law. For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature those things that are of the law, these not having the law are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness to them, and their thoughts, between themselves, accusing or else defending one another in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my Gospel.'³

In this great passage of the Apostle we have the truth that the final judgment of our Lord will be in accordance with the verdict of each one's conscience, that is, in the language of the parable before us according to the state of the lamp which each one of the virgins, both wise and foolish alike, has to present to the Bridegroom when He cometh, burning with sufficient oil. There is no respect of persons

³ Romans ii. 6, seq.

with God, and to those who meet Him at the Last Day unprepared He will say I know you not, whether they are as highly privileged as Christians or Catholics or religious persons, or as slenderly provided with external advantages as the poor heathen of whom St. Paul speaks in comparison with the Jews. Each child of Adam will be judged by his conscience, and for this reason it seems to be the truth which answers to the figure, when we say that conscience is the lamp and the oil.

The next of these three great parables is the well-known Parable of the Talents, which has already been set forth by our Lord in a former part of His teaching, and is here repeated with some notable variations and additions. 'For even as a man going into a far country called his servants and delivered to them his goods. And to one he gave five talents, and to another two, and to another one, to every one according to his proper ability, and immediately he took his journey. And he that had received the five talents went his way, and traded with the same, and gained other five. And in like manner he that had received the two, gained other two. But he that had received the one, going his way, digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. But after a long time the lord of those servants came, and reckoned with them. And he that had received the five talents coming, brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst to me five talents, behold I have gained other five over and above. And his lord said to him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy lord. And he also that had received the two talents came and said, Lord, thou

deliveredst two talents to me, behold I have gained other two. His lord said to him, Well done, good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy lord. But he that had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I know that thou art a hard man, thou reapest where thou hast not sown and gatherest where thou hast not strewed, and being afraid, I went and hid thy talent in the earth, behold here thou hast that which is thine. And his lord answering said to him, Wicked and slothful servant, thou knowest that I reap where I sow not and gather where I have not strewed, thou oughtest therefore to have committed my money to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received my own with usury. Take away therefore the talent from him and give it unto him that hath ten talents. For to every one that hath shall be given and he shall abound, but from him that hath not, that also which he seemeth to have shall be taken away. And the unprofitable servant cast ye out into the exterior darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

The variations which our Lord has introduced into this, which we may call the second version of the parable, are obvious at once. It is no longer a nobleman who goes into a far country to receive a kingdom, who is the lord of the servants. The circumstances, so familiar to the Jews, of the aspirants to the kingdom going to Rome to gain the favour of the Emperor, are not here repeated, nor the common incident of the citizens sending messengers to plead their cause, successfully or not, against the claimant to the throne, nor the return of the prince having received the kingdom from 'Cæsar,'

nor the revenge which after the confirmation of his claims he takes upon those who had thus intrigued against him. 'As for those my enemies who would not have me to reign over them, bring them hither and kill them before me.' These incidents in the former parable may have had their meaning, very applicable indeed to the opposition of the Jews to our Lord and to the chastisement which was to fall upon their nation in consequence. But now the great event which is before the mind is the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and the eternal rewards which are to be meted out to His faithful servants, while they are to be denied to those who have served Him unfaithfully. There is also the great difference that in the former parable the sum committed to his servants was equal in all cases, though the industry of one had multiplied it tenfold, that of another had increased it fivefold, while another had no increase at all to show. In this second parable the talents are unequally distributed, yet it is said, 'To every one according to his proper ability,' and the rewards, which in the former case were in proportion to the industry of the servants, are here all equal, or rather, all of the same kind, 'the entering into the joy of their Lord,' Who in all cases promises that He will 'set them over many things who have been faithful in a few things.'

Thus in this parable our Lord speaks of the recompence of His servants as the same in general, being nothing less than a participation of His own joy, which is the highest kind of reward which any creature can desire or obtain, and which reminds us of the loving words of St. John about the future bliss of the saints, where he says that we do not yet know what we shall be, but that 'we know that when He shall

appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.'⁴ There may be many degrees in the blessedness of the sight of God in Heaven, which may correspond to the degrees of merit in the saints themselves, but it is the same sight of God which forms the immense and boundless felicity of all. And we are told that it is so arranged as to these rewards that no one desires to have more than he has, and in that sense each one is ineffably and immensely happy. And the happiness of each is so transcendent, so far surpassing any human conception, that if one of us were admitted to see the full blessedness of any single saint, he would be unable to conceive anything that could exceed it.

Nothing, therefore, is said by our Lord in this parable as to the difference in degree of the reward of this or that saint. It is perhaps the case that the parable before us is meant by our Lord to convey most pointedly the lesson of warning, such as that which is contained in the incident of the slothful servant, which is fully repeated, and almost in the same words as those in which it is put in the former parable, and that so He passes quickly over the other side, so to say, of the story. The excuse made by the slothful servant is exactly repeated here, save that in the former parable he has received a smaller sum, a pound, which he is said to have wrapped up in a napkin, whereas here he buried his talent in the earth. The character which he imputes to his lord of being a hard man, is just the same in both parables, and it seems as if our Lord would have us understand that, notwithstanding His immense charity and gentleness, He does wish us to look upon His service as of the strictest obli-

⁴ 1 St. John iii. 2.

gation in a certain sense, and as a service of which the most exact account will be required of us, as when St. Paul said of himself, 'Wo is unto me if I preach not the Gospel.' And He repeats here that severe sentence which He had put in the former parable into the mouth of the lord, when he ordered the one pound of the slothful servant to be taken away from him and given to him who had gained ten in addition. 'For to every one that hath shall be given, and he shall abound, but from him that hath not that also which he seemeth to have shall be taken away.' These words express a law in the Kingdom of God, according to which more and more grace, more and greater opportunities, are given to those who use well the grace they have and the opportunities they enjoy, while on the other hand, to use our grace or our opportunities slothfully, is the certain way to have the grace withdrawn and the opportunities forfeited. And our Lord ends the parable here with the final doom of the unfaithful servant, 'And the unprofitable servant cast ye out into the exterior darkness, there shall be weeping and the gnashing of teeth.'

The principles of the action of God as laid down in this parable are not difficult to grasp, though there are comparatively few who realize them fully. In the first place, this line is added to the picture as drawn in the former Parable of the Ten Virgins, that we are not simply in the position towards God of the friends of the bride, as were those virgins, but we are servants with a certain task committed to us, and with talents entrusted to us for the advancement of His glory, for which we shall have to give a very strict account indeed. It might be a great loss to the virgins not to be admitted to the supper; but that is

no loss compared to the losses incurred by the unprofitable servant, who is punished instead of being simply shut out from a happy feast. Thus the relation in which we are to stand to God, according to which will be the issue of the Judgment Day, is put before us with far greater force and a terrible consequence if we are unfaithful. It is no longer our task merely to keep alight a lamp for the wedding. It is industry, labour, care, diligence, and responsibility which is set before us. It is one thing to trim a lamp and feed it with oil, it is another to incur the toil and anxiety required of the servants whose master is a hard man, reaping where he had not sown, and gathering where he had not strewed. Happy indeed are those who understand the parable in all its fulness. The service of God is no hard service, and the fruits of that service are all reaped, not by Him, but by the servants who labour for Him. But they are in themselves so precious, so ineffable in the delights they convey, and the blessedness which they cause, that our Lord, Who truly understands them, and Who loves us too much to allow us to lose any part of them, uses this truth of our absolute bondage to God, in order to stimulate us to every possible exertion, that we may gain as much of them as the most laborious and persistent toil can put within our reach. So the virgins are put before us, if that is the meaning of that parable, as souls who take every pains and diligence to keep their conscience with intense care lest the slightest stain should fall upon it, and whose reward is the crown of their purity and innocence, carefully tended, amidst a thousand dangers, and in that consists their service and their recompence. But there is something beyond the innocence which is required of us, and that something is work for God

in all its manifold variety. We are here, therefore, in a new atmosphere, and the question for our souls to ask themselves is, not whether we have kept our robe spotless, but whether we have laboured fruitfully and profitably for our Master. And there have been some saints of God who have been so much in love with every possible opportunity of labouring for Him, that they have been willing to remain a longer time below in the midst of dangers which might even threaten their own salvation, if they might be able thereby to add to the number of souls whom their labours have helped to add to the number of His Redeemed.

It is impossible to describe adequately the wide field which is thus opened, as it were, to the ambition of the Christian workers for our Lord, especially those who have the vocation to serve Him in the Christian ministry. We may repeat here what St. Paul says of himself, in the passage in which he speaks of the Apostles as having the judgment-seat of Christ present to them in their labours for His glory. 'We must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the proper things of the body, according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil. Knowing therefore the fear of God, we use persuasion to men, for the charity of Christ presseth us, judging thus, that if one died for all, then were all dead, and Christ died for all, that they also who live may not now live unto themselves, but unto Him Who died for them and rose again. But all things are of God, Who hath reconciled us to Himself in Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation. For God indeed was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing to them their sins, and He hath placed in us the word of reconcilia-

tion. For Christ therefore we are ambassadors, God as it were exhorting by us. For Christ, we beseech you, be reconciled to God. Him that knew no sin, for us He hath made sin, that we might be made the justice of God in Him. And we helping exhort you, that you receive not the grace of God in vain.'⁵ And if we turn to the passage which follows, which describes the painful but most blessed toil of the Apostles, we see how ready are those servants to work who understand the treasure which is committed to them in the Christian ministry, and the privilege which is theirs in being able to labour in it under the same conditions as St. Paul. It is well indeed that the reward of these servants is said to be the bliss of intering into the joy of their Lord. The reward of those that follow the wise virgins is indeed joy, represented by the happy Wedding Feast, for the characteristic grace of a well kept conscience is peace, joy, happiness, gladness. And yet to those who understand what it is to labour for God, and in labouring, suffer for Him, there will seem to be a still greater amount of joy even in this world, in the toil and suffering which their vocation brings with it, they will be inclined to tell us that such labour is more rewarded, even in its possession of present joy, than the peaceful serenity of the virgin souls who keep their raiment unstained to the end.

Some writers consider that this second parable of our Lord, in the series on which we are engaged, is especially intended by Him as a warning and instruction to His priests and others who occupy any position of charge in His Kingdom, in the same way as the Parable of the Virgins is thought by the same commentators to be particularly addressed to those who

⁵ 2 Cor. v. 10—21, vi. 1.

serve Him in a life of contemplation. It may be true that such persons in both cases may most naturally and abundantly profit by the teaching of these parables respectively in each case, and yet it seems better to consider them as not confined to the classes of souls to which they may most especially be applied. We all have, in the first instance, to watch most vigilantly over our own interior, and this care is not to be superseded, even in the case of **prelates**, by that which they give to the charges **which** they fill in relation to the souls of others. Such men are bound to keep the lamp of their conscience bright and free from impurity, and well fed with oil, and they even more than others. For if they fail in this, all those over whom they are set must suffer, and a prelate who is not careful of his own soul will never be fit to give an account of the souls of others. It is more true to say that the lesson of the Parable of the Virgins must first be mastered by those who are in such positions as a preliminary step to the lesson of the Parable of the Talents.

And, again, it must be obvious that if the Parable of the Talents, is, as has been said, intended to set before us the duty of diligently labouring in the work of our Master, there can be no better foundation for the diligence that is required of us than the careful self-discipline and purity of conscience which is recommended to us by the parable which has preceded it. Pure souls, who are strict with themselves and avoid any offence to God or man, may not be at once on fire with zeal, or may be timid in undertaking what may imperil their recollection. But when the inspiration of zeal for the glory of God sets them, as it were, on fire, they are likely to be among the most devoted servants of our Lord, the most

unwearied to work for His interests. The lesson of each of these parables may come home to a soul at different times and in different stages of its history and growth, and the earlier lessons are most likely to be needed before the latter are reached. The Parable of the Talents urges on all the duty of labouring in every way that is possible for them for the advancement of the interests of our Lord in the world.

The image used by our Lord in the parable is that of a person who has, as it were, a certain capital committed to him which he is bound to make the most of, and in the shortest time. So that it is a fault or a defect in him if he allows any part of that capital to lie idle, and if he does not invest it in the best goods and take it to the best markets. A traveller who has to reach a certain point by a certain time under some heavy penalty or at the risk of his life if he fails, must consider himself bound not only to avoid straying from the right path, but also not to linger on the road lest he reach his point too late. A person whose safety depends on his gaining the summit of a mountain, is not content with merely keeping the point he has to reach in view. He is careful not to lose a moment which might be spent in advancing up the height which he has to climb. Many long meditations may be made on these words in the former parable, *Negotiamini donec venio*. There are as many opportunities of traffic, says the devout Father Eusebius Nieremberg, as there are souls of our neighbours across whom we come.⁶ There are as many kinds of wares for us to deal with, as there are good works to which we may help our neighbour, evil works from which we

⁶ *Doctr. Ascet.* l. ii. art. 2, c. xii.

may keep him, or practices of supererogation and perfection to which we may incite him. We have as many talents committed to us as there are means within our reach for helping him. We should examine ourselves, therefore, how far we have extended the range of our action with our neighbour in this way. Every one in the world is our neighbour as far as this duty goes, as the poor wounded man came within the charity of the Good Samaritan. It is a matter for careful thought how many our opportunities are, and that we neglect none of them, for we are sometimes led by taste to devote ourselves to some to the exclusion of others, or by diffidence and want of enterprise to leave alone opportunities which here might have opened to us large fields in which to labour. Weariness, indolence, a repugnance to persons with whom we have no sympathy, and to whole classes of whom we have never thought as objects of Christian zeal, may often keep us back.

The great Apostle himself, when he has spoken of the different effects of the Apostolic work in different quarters and on different people, breaks out into the exclamation, 'And for these things who is so sufficient?'⁷ And indeed it requires a mind and an energy like to his to meet all the calls of the work and to fail to understand none of the opportunities of his Master's service. But prayer and zeal and the love of souls may do much, and it seems to be considerations of this kind which are naturally suggested to us by the second parable. There is also great reason to be thankful to our Lord for the loving gentleness with which He has clothed the lesson for us. In the first place, He lets us see

⁷ 2 Cor. ii. 16.

that all those are not punished who labour less than others, but only those who will not labour when they can. Again, He puts the same words into the mouth of the lord in commending the less fruitful of the servants as in commending the more successful, 'The joy of thy lord.' He rejoices intensely over every soul that is won for the company of His redeemed by the labour of any one of the least of His servants. We hear nothing of the lord being thought a 'hard man' by those who laboured well for him. The reproach is put into the mouth of the one who was slothful, who did not understand either the character of his master, or the joy which the work brought with it before the time came for rewarding it, or again, the richness and intense preciousness of the reward when it was conferred.

After the Parable of the Talents, our Lord proceeds at once to the last of this final series of such teachings. 'And when the Son of Man shall come in His Majesty'—or, as the original has it, 'His glory'—'and all the Angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the seat of His Majesty,' or glory. 'And all nations shall be gathered together before Him, and He shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats, and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say to them that shall be on His right hand, Come ye blessed of My Father, possess,' or inherit, 'the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave Me to eat, I was thirsty and you gave Me to drink, I was a stranger and you took Me in, naked and you covered Me, sick and you visited Me, I was in prison and you came to Me. Then shall the just answer

Him saying, Lord, when did we see Thee hungry and fed Thee, or thirsty and gave to Thee drink? and when did we see Thee a stranger and took Thee in? naked and covered Thee? and when did we see Thee sick or in prison and came to Thee? And He answering, shall say to them, Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me. Then shall He say to them also that shall be on His left hand, Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave Me not to eat, I was thirsty and you gave Me not to drink, I was a stranger and you took me not in, naked and you covered Me not, sick and in prison and you visited Me not. Then shall they also answer Him, saying, Lord, when did we see Thee hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick and in prison, and did not minister unto Thee? Then shall He answer them, saying, Amen I say to you, as long as you did it not to one of these least ones, neither did you do it to Me. And these shall go into everlasting punishment, but the just into life everlasting.'

It has already been said that this which is called the last of our Lord's parables, is far more of a prophecy than a parable in the fullest sense, although it possesses the distinguishing characteristic which belongs to that class of teaching. For the characteristic of a parable is that it conveys a truth, not directly, but by an image or similitude, and in this case the truth conveyed is conveyed by a similitude, inasmuch as the circumstances used to describe what is to happen at the Day of Judgment, are, in more than one case, similitudes rather than actual facts. Our Lord will be there present in His Majesty and

the whole number of the angels with Him, and all mankind will be gathered before Him to receive the sentence, each one for himself. But the address of the King to those on the right hand and to those on the left, is parabolical, the answer given by the just and by the wicked is parabolical, in the sense that although the sentence will be conveyed to each soul, and each soul will wake up to the truth and justice of that sentence with some such surprise as is expressed in the words put into the mouths of the just and of the wicked respectively, the whole process will pass much more instantaneously, and the sentences and the thoughts of those who receive it will be much fuller and more extensive in range than the simple expressions in the parable. For it cannot be supposed that the just will be rewarded only for their works of corporal mercy, or the wicked condemned only for the neglect of those works, that the sufferings of the good will not be rewarded as well as the positive crimes of the bad. There is no reward here specified for the practice of purity or of mortification, there is no punishment here mentioned for the thousand vices and crimes by which God is so continually offended. The sentence therefore which mentions one class alone of good deeds, is parabolical, not merely, it seems, as if one out of the whole number of virtues and one out of the whole range of vices had been selected for brevity's sake to stand for all the rest, but because the one that is selected on each side, so to say, represents that aspect of the judgment which our Lord wishes especially to put forward here, and which embraces in a certain true sense the whole range of virtue or vice respectively. Let us try to explain what is meant by this.

The whole range of virtue, the keeping of the commandments of God, is summed up by our Lord when He says, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and thy neighbour as thyself.' Here there are three loves mentioned as duties of man—the love of God, the love of his neighbour, and the love of himself. For we are bound by the strictest obligation to love ourselves, our own souls, our own salvation, in the right way, and this is a part of our duty to God our Creator and Redeemer, and Sanctifier, and it is given by our Lord as the measure of our love for our neighbour, which again comes under the love of God, for it is for His sake, and as His children, that we are bound to love our neighbour. The three great parables which our Lord gives us now, are a summary of our whole duty and set it before us as a matter for which we shall have to account at the last day under this threefold aspect. The Parable of the Virgins may very well represent to us our responsibility for the care of our own souls, and the observance of our own conscience. Much had already been said on this point. The Parable of the Talents has been thought to set before us our duty with regard to the service of God, Who has committed to each one of us a certain amount of ability and opportunity, with regard to which we are responsible to Him. In that Parable we are especially reminded of our duty to labour for His glory and service, and this duty is enforced by the features of the parable in which He sets Himself before us as a taskmaster, one who reaps where He has not sown and the like, or as He puts it in another passage, we are to look on and speak of ourselves when we have done all that is commanded, and as unprofitable servants, as

having only done what we were under an obligation of duty to do.

In the last parable, if we so call it, our Lord seems to set before us the love of our neighbour as the third head of the examination to which we shall be subjected in the day of account. And He does this in the simplest way, speaking only of some of the lighter corporal works of mercy, which are of course very inferior in merit to the spiritual works of the same virtue, but which instance the obligation by which we are bound, first by the commandment which the Scripture tells us God 'has given to every one concerning his neighbour,'⁸ and secondly by the rule made by our Lord that what is done to any one in this kind is done unto Him, and what is refused to any one in this kind is refused to Him. This obligation is expressly said by the Wise Man in the place quoted to be universal, and thus it is this of which our Lord will speak at the Judgment Day to all men, even those who have lived only by the light of the law of nature. For, if they are to be excused for transgressions of other codes on account of ignorance, they cannot be excused from the guilt of violating that which is written in their hearts. And those who have no other law, or but little more, to guide them as to God's will, will be able by keeping this to merit before Him the forgiveness of a multitude of transgressions, as it is said, Charity covereth the multitude of sins. And it may be that many will be forgiven their derelictions against other precepts for the sake of their observance of this, and will be led by their observance of this to do penance for other transgressions, and from their observance of this be brought into greater light so as to become more aware

⁸ Eccclus. xvii. 12.

of what God their Lord and Judge expects of them. It sometimes is found that where there are many other virtues all are lost and of no use for the want of this, whereas there is no fear of those who are perfect in this, failing in any other.

Viewed in this light, these three parables, placed at the close of our Lord's teaching, are wonderful in the witness which they bear to the lovingness of His Sacred Heart. They are sentences given beforehand by the Judge of all, for they not only say what are the points on which the Judgment at the Last Day will turn, and a succession of most tender warnings, but they are prophecies of what will then be found to be the state of the souls which will stand before the Judge.

Thus our Lord seems to say to us, in these His last words, the conclusion alike to His prophecies and to His instructions, that when He is to come again He will find many, He does not say how many, not ready for His coming,—many virgins, whose lamps will not be fed with oil,—many to whom He has entrusted work for His glory who will have hid their talent in the earth and who will have nothing to show of gain, though what He has committed to them is in itself so fruitful and productive,—and not only so, but that the one virtue which has the power of cancelling shortcomings in those who have not kept their lamps bright, and in those who have not used their talents well, will by many not have been used as the remedy for these failures. For good works might have won for some who begun like the foolish virgins, the grace of restoration, and charity might have made up for many negligences on the part of those who had begun by unfaithfulness and slothfulness in the service of the Master. But

what shall make up in the case of those who have failed finally through the want of charity?

Our Lord closes the whole discourse by the words which declare the final and irrevocable doom both of the just and the unjust. 'And these shall go into everlasting punishment, but the just into life everlasting.' The just,—that is, those who have been careful like the prudent virgins, those who have been diligent like the profitable servant, those, last of all, who have practised the works of mercy to their neighbours, in all the wide sense of the word mercy, for the sake of Him, even though they have not at the moment had Him before their mind,—all these shall go into everlasting life. Surely, then, there is no reason for faithful souls to fear the issue of the Day of Doom. Heaven and earth shall pass, but these words of His shall not pass. The Church, in her Sequence in the Mass of *Requiem*, turns our hearts to the special grounds of hope which our Lord does not mention, because they are founded on His own loving doings for us.

Quærens me, sedisti lassus;
Redemisti, crucem passus:
Tantus labor non sit cassus.

Thus He seems to choose to end His account of this great day with words of hope rather than of gloom. The last of the old prophets ends his prophecy with words about God coming to smite the earth with a curse. Our Lord's last words breathe of everlasting life.

Wesley's version 27. 8. 35 (and 36)
A very dry and uninteresting vol.
I have now read it 3 times and
v 12 on each successive occasion
it appeared more arid and more
difficult to get through.

APPENDIX.

Harmony of the Gospels.

§ 132.—*The Procession of Palms.*

St. Matt. xxi. 1—11 ; 14—17.

St. Mark xi. 1—11.

And when they drew nigh to Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto Mount Olivet, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, Go ye into the village that is over against you, and immediately you shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her, loose them and bring them to Me. And if any man shall say anything to you, say ye, that the Lord hath need of them, and forthwith he will let them go.

Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter

And when they were drawing near to Jerusalem and to Bethania at the Mount of Olives, He sendeth two of His disciples, and saith to them, Go into the village that is over against you, and immediately at your coming in thither, you shall find a colt tied, upon which no man yet hath sat, loose him, and bring him. And if any man shall say to you, What are you doing? say ye that the Lord hath need of him, and immediately he will let him come hither.

§ 132.—*The Procession of Palms.*

St. Luke xix. 29—44.

St. John xii. 12—18.

And on the next day, a great multitude that was come to the festival day, when they had heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet Him, and cried, Hosanna, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, the king of Israel.

And it came to pass, when He was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethania unto the mount called Olivet, He sent two of His disciples, saying, Go into the town which is over against you, at your entering into which you shall find the colt of an ass tied, on which no man ever hath sitten, loose him, and bring him hither. And if any man shall ask you, Why do you loose him? you shall say thus unto him, Because the Lord hath need of his service.

And Jesus found a young ass, and sat upon it, as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Sion: Behold, thy king

St. Matt. xxi. 6—8.

of Sion : Behold thy king cometh to thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of her that is used to the yoke.

St. Mark xi. 4—8.

And the disciples going, did as Jesus commanded them.

And they brought the ass and the colt, and laid their garments upon them, and made Him sit thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way, and others cut boughs from the trees, and strewed them in the way.

And going their way, they found the colt tied before the gate without, in the meeting of two ways, and they loose him. And some of them that stood there, said to them, What do you loosing the colt ? Who said to them as Jesus had commanded them, and they let him go with them.

And they brought the colt to Jesus, and they lay their garments on him, and He sat upon him. And many spread their garments in the way, and others cut down boughs from the trees, and strewed them in the way.

St. Luke xix. 32—36.

And they that were sent went their way, and found the colt standing, as He had said unto them. And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said to them, Why loose you the colt? But they said, Because the Lord hath need of him.

And they brought him to Jesus. And casting their garments on the colt, they set Jesus thereon. And as He went, they spread their clothes underneath in the way.

St. John xii. 16—18.

cometh, sitting on an ass's colt. These things His disciples did not know at the first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things to Him.

The multitude therefore gave testimony, which was with Him, when He called Lazarus out of the grave, and raised him from the dead. For which reason also the people came to meet Him, because they heard that He had done this miracle.

St. Matt. xxi. 9.

And the multitudes that went before and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest.

St. Mark xi. 9, 10.

And they that went before and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Blessed be the kingdom of our father David that cometh, Hosanna in the highest.

St. Luke xix. 37—43.

And when He was now coming near the descent of mount Olivet, the whole multitude of His disciples began with joy to praise God with a loud voice, for all the mighty works they had seen, saying, Blessed be the King Who cometh in the name of the Lord, peace in heaven, and glory on high !

And some of the Pharisees, from amongst the multitude, said to Him, Master, rebuke Thy disciples. To whom He said, I say to you, that if these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out.

And when He drew near, seeing the city, He wept over it, saying, If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace ! but now they are hidden from thy eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side,

St. Matt. xxi. 10, 11 ;
15—17.

St. Mark xi. 11.

St. Luke xix. 44.

And when He was come into Jerusalem, the whole city was moved, saying, Who is this? And the people said, This is Jesus the prophet, from Nazareth of Galilee.

And there came to Him the blind, and the lame in the temple, and He healed them. And the chief priests and scribes seeing the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the son of David; were moved with indignation, and said to Him, Hearest Thou what these say? And Jesus said to them, Yea, have you never read, Out of the mouth of infants and of sucklings Thou hast perfected praise? And leaving them, He went out of the city into Bethania, and remained there.

and beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee, and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone, because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation.

And He entered into Jerusalem, into the temple, and having viewed all things roundabout, when now the even-tide was come, He went out to Bethania with the twelve.

§ 133.—*The Gentiles who wished to see our Lord.*

St. John xii. 19—36.

The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Do you see that we prevail nothing? behold, the whole world is gone after Him.

Now there were certain Gentiles among them, who came up to adore on the festival day. These therefore came to Philip, who was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh, and telleth Andrew. Again Andrew and Philip told Jesus.

But Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of Man shall be glorified. Amen, I say to you, unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world, keepeth it unto life eternal. If any man minister to Me, let him follow Me, and where I am, there also shall My minister be. If any man minister to Me, him will My Father honour. Now is My soul troubled. And what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour? But for this cause I came unto

St. John xii. 28—36.

this hour. Father, glorify Thy name.

A voice therefore came from heaven, I have both glorified It, and will glorify It again. The multitude therefore that stood and heard, said that it thundered. Others said, An angel spoke to Him.

Jesus answered, and said, This voice came not because of Me, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of the world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself. (Now this He said, signifying what death He should die.)

The multitude answered Him, We have heard out of the law, that Christ abideth for ever, and how sayest Thou, The Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man? Jesus therefore said to them, Yet a little while, the light is among you. Walk whilst you have the light, that the darkness overtake you not. And he that walketh in darkness, knoweth not whither he goeth. Whilst you have the light, believe in the light that you may be the children of light.

These things Jesus spoke, and He went away, and hid Himself from them.

§ 134.—*The barren Fig-tree. The Cleansing of the Temple.*

St. Matt. xxi. 19, 20,
12, 13, 21, 22.

St. Mark xi. 12—26.

St. Luke xix. 45—48.

And in the morning, returning into the city, He was hungry. And seeing a certain fig-tree by the wayside, He came to it, and found nothing on it but leaves only, and He said to it, May no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And immediately the fig-tree withered away. And the disciples seeing it wondered, saying, How is it presently withered away?

And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the chairs of them that sold doves, and He said to them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer,¹ but you have made it a den of thieves.

And the next day, when they came out from Bethania, He was hungry. And when He had seen afar off a fig-tree having leaves, He came if perhaps He might find any thing on it. And when He was come to it, He found nothing but leaves. For it was not the time for figs. And answering He said to it, May no man hereafter eat fruit of thee any more for ever. And His disciples heard it.

And they came to Jerusalem. And when He was entered into the temple, He began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the chairs of them that sold doves. And He suffered not that any man should carry a vessel through the temple; and He taught, saying to

And entering into the temple, He began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought. Saying to them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer. But you have made it a den of thieves.

¹ Isaias lvi. 7.

St. Matt. xxi. 21.

St. Mark xi. 18—23.

St. Luke xix. 47, 48.

them, Is it not written, My house shall be called the house of prayer to all nations? but you have made it a den of thieves.

Which when the high priests and the scribes had heard, they sought how they might destroy Him. For they feared Him, because the whole multitude was in admiration at His doctrine.

And He was teaching daily in the temple. And the chief priests and the scribes and the rulers of the people sought to destroy Him, and they found not what to do to Him, for all the people were very attentive to hear Him.

And when evening was come, He went forth out of the city.

And when they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots. And Peter remembering, said to Him, Rabbi, behold the fig-tree, which Thou didst curse, is withered away.

And Jesus answering, said to them, Amen I say to you, if you shall have faith, and stagger not, not only this of the fig-tree shall you do, but also if you shall say to this mountain, Take up

And Jesus answering saith to them, Have the faith of God. Amen I say to you, that whosoever shall say to this mountain, Be thou removed and be cast into the sea, and shall not

St. Matt. xxi. 22.	St. Mark xi. 24—26.	St. Luke.
and cast thyself into the sea, it shall be done. And all things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.	stagger in his heart, but believe, that whatsoever he saith shall be done, it shall be done unto him. Therefore I say unto you, all things, whatsoever you ask when ye pray, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come unto you.	
	And when you shall stand to pray, forgive, if you have ought against any man; that your Father also, who is in heaven, may forgive you your sins. But if you will not forgive, neither will your Father that is in heaven, forgive you your sins.	

§ 135.—*The High Priests ask our Lord as to His authority.*

St. Matt. xxi. 23—32.	St. Mark xi. 27—33.	St. Luke xx. 1—8.
And when He was come into the temple, there came to Him, as He was teaching, the chief priests and ancients of the people saying, By what authority dost Thou these things? and who hath given Thee this authority?	And they come again to Jerusalem. And when He was walking in the temple, there come to Him the chief priests and the scribes and the ancients; and they say to him, By what authority dost thou these things? and who hath	And it came to pass, that on one of the days, as He was teaching the people in the temple, and preaching the Gospel, the chief priests and the scribes, with the ancients, met together, and spake to Him, saying, Tell us, by what

St. Matt. xxi. 24—29.

Jesus answering, said to them, I also will ask you one word, which if you shall tell Me, I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or from men?

But they thought within themselves, saying, If we shall say, from heaven, He will say to us, Why then did you not believe him? But if we shall say, from men, we are afraid of the multitude, for all held John as a prophet. And answering Jesus, they said, We know not. He also said to them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

But what think you? A certain man had two sons, and coming to the first, he said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. And he answering, said, I will not. But

St. Mark xi. 29—33.

given Thee this authority that Thou shouldst do these things?

And Jesus answering, said to them, I will also ask you one word, and answer you Me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, was it from heaven or from men? Answer Me.

But they thought with themselves saying, If we say, from heaven, He will say, Why then did you not believe him? If we say, from men, we fear the people. For all men counted John that he was a prophet indeed. And they answering, say to Jesus, We know not. And Jesus answering, saith to them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

St. Luke xx. 3—8.

authority dost Thou these things? or, Who is he that hath given Thee this authority?

And Jesus answering, said to them, I will also ask you one thing. Answer Me. The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?

But they thought within themselves, saying, If we shall say, from heaven: He will say, Why then did you not believe him? But if we say, of men, the whole people will stone us: for they are persuaded that John was a prophet. And they answered, that they knew not whence it was. And Jesus said to them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

St. Matt. xxi. 30—32.

St. Mark.

St. Luke.

afterwards, being moved with repentance, he went. And coming to the other, he said in like manner. And he answering, said, I go, Sir ; and he went not. Which of the two did the father's will? They say to Him, The first. Jesus saith to them, Amen I say to you, that the publicans and the harlots shall go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of justice, and you did not believe him. But the publicans and the harlots believed him : but you, seeing it, did not even afterwards repent, that you might believe him.

§ 136.—*Parable of the Vineyard and the Husbandmen.*

St. Matt. xxi. 33—46.

St. Mark xii. 1—12.

St. Luke xx. 9—19.

Hear ye another parable. There was a man an householder, who planted a vineyard, and made a hedge round about it, and dug in it a press, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and

And He began to speak to them in parables. A certain men planted a vineyard, and made a hedge about it, and dug a place for the wine-vat, and built a tower, and let it to husbandmen,

And He began to speak to the people this parable, A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it out to husbandmen, and he was abroad for a long time. And at the season he sent a servant to

St. Matt. xxi. 34—41.

went into a strange country. And when the time of the fruits drew nigh, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits thereof. And the husbandmen laying hands on his servants, beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants more than the former, and they did to them in like manner. And last of all he sent to them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But the husbandmen seeing the son, said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and we shall have his inheritance. And taking him, they cast him forth out of the vineyard, and killed him. When therefore the Lord of the vineyard shall come, what shall he do to those husbandmen?

They say to Him,
He will bring those

St. Mark xii. 2—9.

and went into a far country. And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant to receive of the fruit of the vineyard. Who having laid hands on him, beat him, and sent him away empty. And again he sent to them another servant, and him they wounded in the head, and used him reproachfully. And again he sent another, and him they killed, and many others, of whom some they beat, and others they killed. Therefore having yet one son, most dear to him, he also sent him unto them last of all, saying, They will reverence my son. But the husbandmen said one to another, This is the heir, come let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours. And laying hold on him, they killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard. What therefore will the lord of the vineyard do?

He will come
and destroy those

St. Luke xx. 11—16.

the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard. Who, beating him, sent him away empty. And again he sent another servant. But they beat him also, and treating him reproachfully, sent him away empty. And again he sent the third, and they wounded him also, and cast him out. Then the lord of the vineyard said, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son. It may be, when they see him, they will reverence him. Whom when the husbandmen saw, they thought within themselves, saying, This is the heir, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours. So casting him out of the vineyard, they killed him. What therefore will the lord of the vineyard do to them?

He will come,
and will destroy

St. Matt. xxi. 42—46.
evil men to an evil
end, and will let
out his vineyard
to other husband-
men, that shall
render him the
fruit in due sea-
son.

Jesus saith to
them, Have you
never read in the
Scriptures, The
stone which the
builders rejected,
the same is become
the head of the
corner?¹ By the
Lord this has been
done, and it is
wonderful in our
eyes. Therefore I
say to you, that
the kingdom of
God shall be taken
from you, and shall
be given to a na-
tion yielding the
fruits thereof. And
whosoever shall
fall on this stone,
shall be broken;
but on whomso-
ever it shall fall,
it shall grind him
to powder.

And when the
chief priests and
Pharisees had
heard His para-
bles, they knew
that He spoke of
them. And seek-
ing to lay hands
on Him, they fear-
ed the multitudes,
because they held
Him as a prophet.

St. Mark xii. 10—12.
husbandmen, and
will give the vine-
yard to others.

And have you not
read this Scripture,
The stone which
the builders re-
jected, the same
is made the head
of the corner? By
the Lord has this
been done, and it
is wonderful in our
eyes.

And they sought
to lay hands on
Him, but they
feared the people.
For they knew
that He spoke this
parable unto them.
And leaving Him
they went their
way.

St. Luke xx. 17—19.
those husband-
men, and will give
the vineyard to
others. Which they
hearing, said to
him, God forbid.

But He looking on
them, said, What
is this then that is
written, The stone
which the builders
rejected, the same
is become the
head of the cor-
ner? Whosoever
shall fall upon that
stone, shall be
bruised, and upon
whomsoever it
shall fall, it will
grind him to pow-
der.

And the chief
priests and the
scribes sought to
lay hands on Him
the same hour, but
they feared the
people, for they
knew that He
spoke this parable
to them.

¹ Psalm cxvii. 22.

§ 137.—*The Wedding of the King's Son.*

St. Matt. xxii. 1—14.

And Jesus answering, spoke again in parables to them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king, who made a marriage for his son. And he sent his servants, to call them that were invited to the marriage, and they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying, Tell them that were invited, Behold, I have prepared my dinner, my beeves and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come ye to the marriage. But they neglected, and went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise. And the rest laid hands on his servants, and having treated them contumeliously, put them to death. But when the king had heard of it, he was angry, and sending his armies, he destroyed those murderers, and burnt their city.

St. Matt. xxii. 8—14.

Then saith he to his servants, The marriage indeed is ready, but they that were invited were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the high ways, and as many as you shall find, call to the marriage. And his servants going forth into the ways, gathered together all that they found, both bad and good, and the marriage was filled with guests.

And the king went in to see the guests, and he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment. And he saith to him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment? But he was silent. Then the king said to the waiters, Bind his hands and feet, and cast him into the exterior darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

For many are called, but few are chosen.

§ 138.—*The question of paying tribute to Cæsar.*

St. Matt. xxii. 15—22.

St. Mark xii. 13—17.

St. Luke xx. 20—26.

Then the Pharisees going, consulted among themselves how to in-snare Him in His speech. And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that Thou art a

And they sent to Him some of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, that they should catch Him in His words. Who coming, say to Him, Master, we know that Thou art a true speaker, and carest not for

And being upon the watch, they sent spies, who should feign themselves just, that they might take hold of Him in His words, that they might deliver Him up to the authority and

St. Matt. xxii. 17—22.

true speaker, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest Thou for any man, for Thou dost not regard the person of men. Tell us therefore what dost thou think, is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not?

St. Mark xii. 15—17.

any man, for Thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or shall we not give it?

St. Luke xx. 21—26.

power of the governor. And they asked Him, saying, Master, we know that Thou speakest and teachest rightly, and Thou dost not respect any person, but teachest the way of God in truth. Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Cæsar, or no?

But Jesus knowing their wickedness, said, Why do ye tempt Me, ye hypocrites? Show me the coin of the tribute. And they offered Him a penny. And Jesus saith to them, Whose image and inscription is this? They said to Him, Cæsar's. Then He saith to them, Render therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God, the things that are God's. And hearing this they wondered, and leaving Him, went their ways.

Who knowing their wiliness, saith to them, Why tempt you Me? Bring Me a penny that I may see it. And they brought it Him. And He saith to them, Whose is this image, and inscription? They say to Him, Cæsar's. And Jesus answering, said to them, Render therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at Him.

But He, considering their guile, said to them, Why tempt you Me? Show Me a penny. Whose image and inscription hath it? They answering, said to Him, Cæsar's. And He said to them, Render therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they could not reprehend His word before the people, and wondering at His answer, they held their peace.

§ 139.—*The question of the Sadducees.*

St. Matt. xxii. 23—33.

That day there came to Him the Sadducees, who say

St. Mark xii. 18—27.

And there came to Him the Sadducees, who say there

St. Luke xx. 27—40.

And there came to Him some of the Sadducees,

St. Matt. xxii. 24—30. there is no resurrection, and asked Him, saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die having no son, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up issue to his brother. Now there were with us seven brethren, and the first having married a wife, died, and not having issue, left his wife to his brother. In like manner the second, and the third, and so on to the seventh. And last of all the woman died also. At the resurrection therefore whose wife of the seven shall she be? for they all had her.

And Jesus answering, saith to them, You err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they shall neither marry nor be mar-

St. Mark xii. 19—25. is no resurrection, and they asked Him, saying, Master, Moses wrote unto us, that if any man's brother die, and leave his wife behind him, and leave no children, his brother should take his wife and raise up seed to his brother. Now there were seven brethren, and the first took a wife, and died leaving no issue. And the second took her and died, and neither did he leave any issue. And the third in like manner. And the seven all took her in like manner, and did not leave issue. Last of all, the woman also died. In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise again, whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife.

And Jesus answering, saith to them, Do ye not therefore err, because you know not the Scriptures, nor the power of God? For when they shall rise

St. Luke xx. 28—35. who deny that there is any resurrection, and they asked Him, Saying, Master, Moses wrote unto us, If any man's brother die, having a wife, and he leave no children, that his brother should take her to wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. There were therefore seven brethren, and the first took a wife, and died without children. And the next took her to wife, and he also died childless. And the third took her. And in like manner all the seven, and they left no children, and died. Last of all the woman died also. In the resurrection therefore, whose wife of them shall she be? for all the seven had her to wife.

And Jesus said to them, The children of this world marry and are given in marriage, but they that shall be accounted worthy of that world, and of the resur-

St. Matt. xxi. 31—33.
ried, but shall be
as the angels of
God in heaven.

St. Mark xii. 26, 27.
again from the
dead, they shall
neither marry, nor
be married, but are
as the angels in
heaven.

St. Luke xx. 36—40.
rection from the
dead, shall neither
be married, nor
take wives. Nei-
ther can they die
any more, for they
are equal to the
angels, and are the
children of God,
being the children
of the resurrection.

And concerning
the resurrection of
the dead, have you
not read that which
was spoken by
God, saying to you,
I am the God of
Abraham, and the
God of Isaac, and
the God of Jacob?³
He is not the God
of the dead, but of
the living.

And as concern-
ing the dead that
they rise again,
have you not read
in the book of
Moses, how in the
bush God spoke
to him, saying, I
am the God of
Abraham, and the
God of Isaac, and
the God of Jacob?
He is not the God
of the dead, but of
the living. You
therefore, do great-
ly err.

Now that the
dead rise again,
Moses also show-
ed, at the bush,
when he called the
Lord, The God of
Abraham, and the
God of Isaac, and
the God of Jacob.
For He is not the
God of the dead,
but of the living,
for all live to Him.

And the multi-
tudes hearing it,
were in admiration
at His doctrine.

And some of the
scribes answering,
said to Him, Mas-
ter, Thou hast said
well. And after
that they durst not
ask Him any more
questions.

§ 140.—*The Great Commandment of the Law. The Son of David.*

St. Matt. xxii. 34—36.

St. Mark xii. 28—34.

But the Pharisees hearing
that He had silenced the
Sadducees, came together.
And one of them, a doctor

And there came one of the
scribes that had heard them
reasoning together, and see-
ing that He had answered

³ Exod. iii. 6.

St. Matt. xxii. 36—40.

of the law, asked Him, tempting Him, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said to him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind.⁴ This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like to this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets.

St. Mark xii. 29—34.

them well, asked Him, which was the first commandment of all. And Jesus answered him, The first commandment of all is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one God. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind, and with thy whole strength. This is the first commandment. And the second is like to it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is no other commandment greater than these.

And the scribes said to Him, Well, Master, thou hast said in truth, that there is one God, and there is no other besides Him. And that He should be loved with the whole heart, and with the whole understanding, and with the whole soul, and with the whole strength, and to love one's neighbour as oneself, is a greater thing than all holocausts and sacrifices. And Jesus seeing that he had answered wisely, said to him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask Him any question.

St. Matt. xxii. 41—46.

And the Pharisees being gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, What think you of Christ? whose son is He?

St. Mark xii. 35—43.

And Jesus answering said, teaching in the temple, How do the scribes say, that Christ is the son of David?

St. Luke xx. 41—47.

But He said to them, How say they that Christ is the son of David? And David himself saith in the book of psalms,

⁴ Deut. vi. 5

St. Matt. xxii. 43—46.

They say to Him, David's. He saith to them, How then doth David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit on my right hand, until I make thy enemies thy footstool?⁵ If David then call Him Lord, how is He his son? And no man was able to answer Him a word; neither durst any man from that day forth ask Him any more questions.

St. Mark xii. 36—40.

For David himself saith by the Holy Ghost, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit on my right hand, until I make thy enemies thy footstool. David therefore himself called Him Lord, and whence is He then his son? And a great multitude heard Him gladly.

St. Luke xx. 43—47.

The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thy enemies thy footstool. David then calleth Him Lord, and how is He his son?

And He said to them in His doctrine, Beware of the scribes, who love to walk in long robes, and to be saluted in the market-place. And to sit in the first chairs in the synagogues, and to have the highest places at suppers, who devour the houses of widows under the pretence of long prayer, these shall receive greater judgment.

And in the hearing of all the people, He said to His disciples, Beware of the scribes, who desire to walk in long robes, and love salutations in the market-place, and the first chairs in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts, who devour the houses of widows, feigning long prayer. These shall receive greater damnation.

⁵ Psalm cix. 1.

§ 141.—*The discourse of our Lord to the people about the Scribes and Pharisees.*

St. Matt. xxiii. 1—39.

Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying, The scribes and the Pharisees have sitten on the chair of Moses. All things therefore whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do, but according to their works do ye not, for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy and insupportable burdens, and lay them on men's shoulders; but with a finger of their own they will not move them.

And all their works they do for to be seen of men. For they make their phylacteries broad, and enlarge their fringes. And they love the first places at feasts, and the first chairs in the synagogues, and salutations in the market-place, and to be called by men, Rabbi.

But be not you called Rabbi. For one is your master, and all you are brethren. And call none your father upon earth, for one is your father, who is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters, for one is your master, Christ. He that is the greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled, and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

But wo to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you shut the kingdom of heaven against men, for

St. Matt. xxiii. 14—27.

you yourselves do not enter in, and those that are going in, you suffer not to enter. Wo to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you devour the houses of widows, praying long prayers. For this you shall receive the greater judgment. Wo to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you go round about the sea and the land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, you make him the child of hell twofold more than yourselves.

Wo to you blind guides! that say, whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing, but he that shall swear by the gold of the temple, is a debtor. Ye foolish and blind, for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? And whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing, but whosoever shall swear by the gift that is upon it, is a debtor. Ye blind, for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? He therefore that sweareth by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things that are upon it. And whosoever shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by Him that dwelleth in it. And he that sweareth by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by Him that sitteth thereon.

Wo to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites? because you tithe mint, and anise, and cummin, and have

St. Matt. xxiii. 24—31.

left the weightier things of the law, judgment, and mercy, and faith. These things you ought to have done, and not leave those undone. Blind guides, who strain out a gnat, and swallow a camel.

Wo to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you make clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but within you are full of rapine and uncleanness. Thou blind Pharisee, first make clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, that the outside may become clean.

Wo to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you are like to whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear to men beautiful, but within are full of dead men's bones, and of all filthiness. So you also outwardly indeed appear to men just, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

Wo to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; that build the sepulchres of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the just, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore you are witnesses against yourselves,

St. Matt. xxiii. 32—39.

that you are the sons of them that killed the prophets.

Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. You serpents, generation of vipers, how will you flee from the judgment of hell? Therefore behold I send to you prophets, and wise men, and scribes, and some of them you will put to death and crucify, and some you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city, that upon you may come all the just blood that hath been shed upon the earth, from the blood of Abel the just, even unto the blood of Zacharias the son of Barachias, whom you killed between the temple and the altar. Amen I say to you, all these things shall come upon this generation. Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee! how often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldst not? Behold, your house shall be left to you desolate. For I say to you, you shall not see Me henceforth till you say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.

§ 142.—*The Widow's mite.*

St. Matt. xii. 41—44.

And Jesus sitting over against the treasury, beheld how the people cast money

St. Luke xxi. 1—4.

And looking on, He saw the rich men cast their gifts into the treasury. And He

St. Matt. xii. 42—44.

into the treasury, and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she cast in two mites, which make a farthing.

And calling His disciples together, He saith to them, Amen I say to you, this poor widow hath cast in more than all they who have cast into the treasury. For all they did cast in of their abundance, but she of her want cast in all she had, even her whole living.

St. Luke xxi. 2—4.

also saw a certain poor widow casting in two brass mites.

And He said, Verily I say to you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all. For all these have of their abundance cast into the offerings of God, but she of her want hath cast in all the living that she had.

§ 143.—*The Blindness of the Jews.*

St. John xii. 37—50.

And whereas He had done so many miracles before them, they believed not in Him, that the saying of Isaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which He said, Lord, who hath believed our hearing? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? ⁶ Therefore they could not believe, because Isaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.⁷ These things said Isaias, when he saw His glory, and spoke of Him.

However many of the chief men also believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, that they might not be cast out of the synagogue. For they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God.

⁶ Isaias liii. 1.

St. John xii. 44—50.

But Jesus cried, and said, He that believeth in Me, doth not believe in Me but in Him that sent Me. And he that seeth Me, seeth Him that sent Me. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth in Me may not remain in darkness. And if any man hear My words, and keep them not, I do not judge him, for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that despiseth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of Myself, but the Father Who sent Me, He gave me commandment what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting. The things therefore that I speak, even as the Father said unto Me, so do I speak.

⁷ Isaias vi. 9.

§ 144.—*The Destruction of Jerusalem foretold by our Lord.*

St. Matt. xxiv. 1—28.

And Jesus being come out of the temple, went away. And His disciples came to show Him the buildings of the temple. And He answering, said to them, Do you see all these things? Amen I say to you, there shall not be left here a stone upon a stone that shall not be destroyed.

And when He was sitting on Mount Olivet, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, Tell us when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the consummation of the world?

And Jesus answering, said to them, Take heed that no man seduce you, for many will come in My name, saying, I am Christ, and they will seduce many. And you shall hear of wars and rumours of wars. See that ye

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St. Mark xiii. 1—23.

And as He was going out of the temple, one of His disciples saith to Him, Master, behold what manner of stones, and what buildings are here. And Jesus answering, said to him, Seest thou all these great buildings? There shall not be left a stone upon a stone, that shall not be thrown down.

And as He sat on the Mount of Olivet over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked Him apart, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall begin to be fulfilled?

And Jesus answering, began to say to them, Take heed lest any man deceive you. For many shall come in My name, saying, I am He, and they shall deceive many. And when you shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, fear ye

St. Luke xxi. 5—24.

And some saying of the temple, that it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, He said, these things which you see, the days will come in which there shall not be left a stone upon a stone that shall not be thrown down.

And they asked Him, saying, Master, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when they shall begin to come to pass?

Who said, Take heed you be not seduced, for many will come in My name, saying, I am he; and the time is at hand, go ye not therefore after them. And when you shall hear of wars and seditions, be not terrified, these things must

St. Matt. xxiv. 7-14.

be not troubled. For these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be pestilences, and famines, and earthquakes in places. Now all these are the beginnings of sorrows.

Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall put you to death, and you shall be hated by all nations for My name's sake. And then shall many be scandalized, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall seduce many. And because iniquity hath abounded, the charity of many shall grow cold. But he that shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved. And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world, for a testimony to all

St. Matt. xiii. 8-12.

not. For such things must needs be, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and famines. These things are the beginning of sorrows.

But look to yourselves. For they shall deliver you up to councils, and in the synagogues you shall be beaten, and you shall stand before governors and kings for My sake, for a testimony unto them. And unto all nations the Gospel must first be preached. And when they shall lead you and deliver you up, be not thoughtful beforehand, what you shall speak, but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye. For it is not you that speak, but the Holy Ghost. And the brother shall betray the brother

St. Luke xxi. 10-16.

first come to pass, but the end is not yet presently. Then He said to them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there shall be great earthquakes in divers places, and pestilences, and famines, and terrors from heaven, and there shall be great signs.

But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and into prisons, dragging you before kings and governors for My name's sake. And it shall happen unto you for a testimony. Lay it up therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before how you shall answer. For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to resist and gainsay. And you shall be betrayed by your parents and brethren, and kinsmen and

St. Matt. xxiv. 15—21.
nations, and then
shall the consum-
mation come.

St. Mark xiii. 13—19.
unto death, and
the father his son,
and children shall
rise up against the
parents, and shall
work their death.
And you shall be
hated by all men
for My name's
sake. But he that
shall endure unto
the end, he shall
be saved.

St. Luke xxi. 17—24.
friends, and some
of you they will put
to death. And you
shall be hated by
all men for My
name's sake. But
a hair of your head
shall not perish.
In your patience
you shall possess
your souls.

When therefore
you shall see the
abomination of
desolation, which
was spoken of by
Daniel the prophet,⁸ standing in
the holy place (he
that readeth, let
him understand.)
Then they that are
in Judæa, let them
flee to the moun-
tains, and he that
is on the house-
top, let him not
come down to take
anything out of his
house, and he that
is in the field, let
him not go back
to take his coat.
And wo to them
that are with child,
and that give suck
in those days. But
pray that your
flight be not in
the winter, or on
the sabbath. For
there shall be then
great tribulation,
such as hath not

And when you
shall see the abo-
mination of deso-
lation, standing
where it ought not,
(he that readeth let
him understand :)
then let them that
are in Judæa flee
unto the moun-
tains, and let him
that is on the
housetop not go
down into the
house, nor enter
therein to take
anything out of the
house, and let him
that shall be in
the field not turn
back to take up
his garment. And
wo to them that
are with child, and
that give suck in
those days. But
pray ye, that these
things happen not
in winter. For in
those days shall
be such tribula-
tions, as were not
from the beginning

And when you
shall see Jerusalem
compassed about
with an army, then
know that the de-
solation thereof is
at hand. Then let
those who are in
Judæa flee to the
mountains, and
those who are in
the midst thereof,
depart out, and
those who are in
the countries, not
enter into it. For
those are the days
of vengeance, that
all things may be
fulfilled that are
written. But wo
to them that are
with child, and
give suck in those
days, for there
shall be great dis-
tress in the land,
and wrath upon
this people. And
they shall fall by
the edge of the
sword, and shall be
led away captives

⁸ Dan. ix. 27.

St. Matt. xxiv. 22—28.

been from the beginning of the world until now, neither shall be. And unless those days had been shortened, no flesh should be saved, but for the sake of the elect those days shall be shortened.

Then if any man shall say to you, Lo here is Christ, or there, do not believe him. For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch as to deceive (if possible) even the elect. Behold I have told it to you, beforehand. If therefore they shall say to you, Behold He is in the desert, go ye not out, Behold He is in the closets, believe it not. For as lightning cometh out of the east, and appeareth even into the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. Wheresoever the body shall be, there shall the eagles also be gathered together.

St. Mark xiii. 20—23.

of the creation which God created until now, neither shall be. And unless the Lord had shortened the days, no flesh shall be saved, but for the sake of the elect which He hath chosen, He hath shortened the days.

And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ, lo, He is here, do not believe. For there will rise up false Christs, and false prophets, and they shall show signs and wonders, to seduce (if it were possible) even the elect. Take you heed, therefore, behold I have foretold you all things.

St. Luke.

into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles, till the times of the nations be fulfilled.

§ 145.—*The End of the World.*

St. Matt. xxiv. 29—36.

And immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be moved, and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall all tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty. And He shall send His angels with a trumpet, and a great voice, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest parts of the heavens to the utmost bounds of them

St. Mark xiii. 24—32.

But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light. And the stars of heaven shall be falling down, and the powers, that are in heaven, shall be moved. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds, with great power and glory. And then shall He send His angels, and shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

St. Luke xxi. 25—36.

And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and upon the earth, distress of nations, by reason of the confusion of the roaring of the sea and of the waves, men withering away for fear, and expectation of what shall come upon the whole world. For the powers of heaven shall be moved; and then they shall see the Son of Man coming in a cloud, with great power and majesty.

But when these things begin to come to pass, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is at hand.

And from the fig-tree learn a

Now of the fig-tree learn ye a

And He spoke to them a simili-

St. Matt. xxiv. 33—35.

parable, When the branch thereof is now tender, and the leaves come forth, you know that summer is nigh. So you also, when you shall see all these things, know ye that it is nigh, even at the doors.

Amen I say to you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done. Heaven and earth shall pass, but My words shall not pass.

St. Mark xiii. 29—31.

parable. When the branch thereof is now tender, and the leaves are come forth, you know that summer is very near. So you also when you shall see these things come to pass, know ye that it is very nigh, even at the doors.

Amen I say to you, that this generation shall not pass, until all these things be done. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.

St. Luke xxi. 30—36.

tude. See the fig-tree, and all the trees, when they now shoot forth their fruit, you know that summer is nigh; so you also, when you shall see these things come to pass, know that the kingdom of God is at hand.

Amen I say to you, this generation shall not pass away, till all things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.

And take heed to yourselves, lest perhaps your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly. For as a snare shall it come upon all that sit upon the face of the whole earth. Watch ye, therefore, praying at all times, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that are to come, and to stand before the Son of Man.

St. Matt. xxiv. 36.

St. Mark xiii. 32.

St. Luke.

But of that day
and hour no one
knoweth, no not
the angels of
heaven, but the
Father alone.

But of that day
or hour no man
knoweth, neither
the angels in hea-
ven, nor the Son,
but the Father.

St. Matt. xxiv. 37—44.

And as in the days of Noe,
so shall also the coming of
the Son of Man be. For as
in the days before the flood,
they were eating and drink-
ing, marrying and giving in
marriage, even till that day
in which Noe entered into
the ark. And they knew not
till the flood came, and took
them all away ; so also shall
the coming of the Son of
Man be.

Then two shall be in the
field, one shall be taken, and
one shall be left. Two women
shall be grinding at the mill,
one shall be taken, and one
shall be left. Watch ye there-
fore, because you know not
what hour your Lord will
come. But this know ye, that
if the good man of the house
knew at what hour the thief
would come, he would cer-
tainly watch, and would not
suffer his house to be broken
open. Wherefore be you also
ready, because at what hour
you know not, the Son of
Man will come.

St. Mark xiii. 33—37.

Take ye heed, watch and
pray. For ye know not when
the time is. Even as a man
who going into a far country,

St. Mark xiii. 35—37.

left his house, and gave
authority to his servants over
every work, and commanded
the porter to watch. Watch
ye therefore (for you know
not when the lord of the
house cometh, at even, or at
midnight, or at the cock-
crowing, or in the morning).
Lest coming on a sudden, he
find you sleeping. And what
I say to you, I say to all,
Watch.

St. Matt. xxiv. 45—51.

Who, thinkest thou, is a
faithful and wise servant,
whom his lord hath appointed
over his family, to give them
meat in season ? Blessed is
that servant, whom when his
lord shall come, he shall find
so doing. Amen I say to you,
he shall place him over all
his goods. But if that evil
servant shall say in his heart,
My lord is long a coming,
and shall begin to strike his
fellow-servants, and shall eat
and drink with drunkards,
the lord of that servant shall
come in a day that he hopeth
not, and at an hour that he
knoweth not, and shall sepa-
rate him, and appoint his
portion with the hypocrites.
There shall be weeping and
gnashing of teeth.

§ 146.—*Parable of the Ten Virgins.*

St. Matt. xxv. 1—13.

Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be like to ten virgins, who taking their lamps went out to meet the bridegroom and the bride. And five of them were foolish, and five wise. But the five foolish, having taken their lamps, did not take oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with the lamps. And the bridegroom tarrying, they all slumbered and slept.

And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, Give us of your oil for our lamps are gone out. The wise answered, saying, Lest perhaps there be not enough for us and for you, go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

Now whilst they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and they that were ready, went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut. But at last come also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answering, said, Amen I say to you, I know you not.

Watch ye therefore, because you know not the day nor the hour.

§ 147.—*Parable of the Talents.*

St. Matt. xxv. 14—30.

For even as a man going into a far country, called his

St. Matt. xxv. 15—24.

servants, and delivered to them his goods. And to one he gave five talents, and to another two, and to another one, to every one according to his proper ability, and immediately he took his journey.

And he that had received the five talents, went his way, and traded with the same, and gained other five. And in like manner he that had received the two, gained other two. But he that had received the one, going his way digged into the earth, and hid his lord's money.

But after a long time the lord of those servants came, and reckoned with them.

And he that had received the five talents coming, brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou didst deliver to me five talents, behold I have gained other five over and above. His lord said to him, Well done, good and faithful servant! because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy lord. And he also that had received the two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst two talents to me, behold I have gained other two. His lord said to him, Well done, good and faithful servant! because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

But He that had received

St. Matt. xxv. 25—30.

the one talent, came and said, Lord, I know that thou art a hard man, thou reapest where thou hast not sown, and gatherest where thou hast not strewed. And being afraid I went and hid thy talent in the earth, behold here thou hast that which is thine. And his lord answering, said to him, Wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sow not, and gather where I have not strewed, thou oughtest therefore to have committed my money to the bankers, and at my coming, I should have received my own with usury. Take ye away therefore the talent from him, and give it him that hath ten talents. For to every one that hath shall be given, and he shall abound, but from him that hath not, that also which he seemeth to have shall be taken away. And the unprofitable servant cast ye out into the exterior darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

§ 148.—*The Sentence of the Judge.*

St. Matt. xxv. 31—46.

And when the Son of Man shall come in His majesty, and all the angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the seat of His majesty, and all nations shall be gathered together before Him, and He shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd

St. Matt. xxv. 33—43.

separateth the sheep from the goats, and He shall set the sheep on His right hand but the goats on His left.

Then shall the King say to them that shall be on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave Me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me to drink; I was a stranger, and you took Me in; naked, and you covered Me; sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.

Then shall the just answer Him, saying, Lord, when did we see Thee hungry, and fed Thee? thirsty, and gave Thee drink? and when did we see Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or naked, and covered Thee? or when did we see Thee sick or in prison, and came to Thee?

And the King answering, shall say to them, Amen I say to you, so long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me.

Then He shall say to them also that shall be on His left hand, Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry, and you gave Me not to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me not to drink; I was a stranger, and you took Me not in; naked, and you covered Me not;

St. Matt xxv. 44—46.

sick and in prison, and you did not visit Me. Then they also shall answer Him, saying, Lord, when did we see Thee hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to Thee? Then He shall answer them, saying, Amen I say to you, as long as you did it not to one of these least, neither did you do it to Me. And these shall

St. Matt.

go into everlasting punishment, but the just into life everlasting.

St. Luke xxi. 37, 38.

And in the day-time He was teaching in the temple, but at night, going out, He abode in the mount that is called Olivet. And all the people came early in the morning to Him in the temple, to hear Him.



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